

# **SUNSET ACADEMY**

**A Colorado Shines Level 4 School**



## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

March 2023

We are extremely pleased that you have selected Sunset Academy for your child. It is a privilege for us to be part of the upbringing of your little one during these early years. We look forward to working with you in giving your child a loving start.

When you enroll your child at Sunset Academy, you agree to the terms and conditions that are specified in this handbook, as revised over time. Read on and ask any questions for clarification before you enroll. Once enrolled, you will be bound by these policies and procedures.

This handbook may change over time. We will provide updated version online and inform you of the changes. It is your responsibility to read and understand the updates of the "Parent Handbook" and how it relates to your contract with Sunset Academy.

Please visit with the director or assistant director if you need any clarification or interpretation to the handbook.

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# 1. Values, Mission & Goals

## a. Our Values

- We believe that every child has the right for a nurturing and safe environment in which they can feel comfortable and secure.
- We believe each child has the right to develop a positive self-image – to feel good about who they are.
- We believe that each child is unique and has unique needs.
- We believe that by treating each child with love and respect, they in turn will treat others with the same love and respect.

## b. Mission Statement

### *Give Your Child A Loving Start*

Our mission is achieved by offering a safe, loving, and nurturing environment, promoting mutual respect and allowing for individual differences. We offer experiences that foster the development of positive self-esteem and creativity. Children discover, learn and develop through hands-on experiential opportunities and positive interactions.

## c. Goals

### • **Children Goals**

The goal of the school on the children is to support each child's development to their maximum potential in all areas of growth and learning.

### • **Family Goals**

To establish and maintain a collaborative relationship with each child's family in order to achieve the child's development potential.

### • **Teacher Goals**

Teachers at our school play a vitally important role in accomplishing our mission. We employ a dedicated staff of early childhood educators and provide an encouraging environment for them growing in their knowledge and skills to excel in their job.

### • **Program Goals**

To meet and exceed the qualifications for a Colorado Shines Level 4 school in the areas such as work force qualifications, family partnership, leadership, management & administration, learning environment, child health and other area.

## 2. General Information

### a. Contact and Social Media Information

Address: 711 S. Sunset St, Longmont, CO 80501  
Tel: 303-651-6600  
Fax: 303-651-6732  
Website: [www.sunsetacademy.com](http://www.sunsetacademy.com)  
Email: [director@sunsetacademy.com](mailto:director@sunsetacademy.com)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/longmontpreschool>  
Twitter: @academy\_sunset

### b. Our Services

Sunset Academy provides childcare and educational services for children from 6 weeks of age through 12 years and 11 months of age.

We provide up to full-day (9 hours) childcare and education services to the following age groups:

- infants (6-week to 12-months)
- toddlers (1-3 years)
- preschool (2.5-4 years)
- pre-kindergarten (4-5 years)

For the school age children (6 to 12 years and 11 months), we provide Before-and-After School care when primary schools are in session; During spring, summer, fall, and winter breaks of the primary schools, we provide full-time care to these children.

### c. Hours and Days of Operation

Sunset Academy is open year around, Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, except for the observed holidays and on the days we close early. Our school year starts from the middle of August of each year.

Each year, we are closed to observe the following holidays.

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Black Friday (the day after thanksgiving)
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day

In addition, we close early on the following days:

- Christmas Eve - closed at 2:00 PM
- New Year's Eve – closed at 2:00 PM
- Staff Meeting and Training Day: we close early at 4:00 PM on the second Friday of each month

### d. Useful websites and App

- Parent Portal: <https://myprocare.com>
- Curriculum: <https://teachingstrategies.com/>

### **3. Governing Policies**

There are policies that we observe in the school, but these ones are the most important ones. They govern all policies we present later in the handbook.

#### **a. Licensing Rules & Regulations**

We are licensed by Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC). From time to time the government agencies make changes to the rules and regulations for childcare centers. We are not always notified of these changes, but we do our best to update our policies accordingly.

The document is being revised continually. In order to find the latest, check out this table of contents:

<https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/DisplayRule.do?action=ruleinfo&ruleId=2827>

#### **b. Non-Discrimination Policy**

Sunset Academy does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors and vendors.

#### **c. Report Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Policy**

Staff members of Sunset Academy are required by law to report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. All staff members are required to participate in annual training on identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. If a report is necessary, the report will be made immediately to the County Department of Human Services or local law enforcement agency.

Also, parents have the right to report concerns they may have regarding childcare providers for their children. Parents can report by calling: Boulder County Department of Human Services: 303-441-1240. Colorado statewide Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline is: 844-264-5437

## 4. Education Information

### a. Curriculum

Sunset Academy has selected The Creative Curriculum® by The Teaching Strategies as our main curriculum. The Creative Curriculum® is a comprehensive, scientifically based curriculum for children from birth to six years of age. This nationally known model for best practices provides the teachers with information on the strengths and needs of each of their students, as well as content on instructional practices. Teachers use the Creative Curriculum® for observation, assessment, planning, and implementation of a developmentally appropriate program that promotes children's social-emotional development and learning in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.

You can find more information at [www.creativecurriculum.net](http://www.creativecurriculum.net).

### b. Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines

Our curriculum adhere to with the domains of [Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines](#), and is age-specific to the children the program serves to include:

1) For all ages:

- physical development and health;
- social & emotional development;
- language and literacy development;
- cognitive development;
- approaches to learning

2) Preschool and pre-kindergarten Ages (3-5):

- literacy knowledge & skills;
- logic & reasoning;
- mathematics knowledge & skills;
- science knowledge & skills;
- social studies knowledge & skills;
- creative arts expression

### c. Assessment Tool

Children's progress is assessed throughout the year using the Teaching Strategies GOLD progress mapping system.

*Teaching Strategies "GOLD"* is an assessment tool used for tracking student progress in the following areas of development: Social-Emotional; Physical; Language; Literacy; Cognitive; Mathematics; Science & Technology; Social Studies; and the Arts. Ongoing observation and GOLD benchmarks are used by the classroom team to select goals and to plan effective instruction for groups as well as for individual students. Goals and activities are based on each student's needs. Progress is checked three times throughout each program year, and teachers will share progress with parents at parent-teacher conferences. GOLD is part of the Colorado Department of Education *Results Matters* initiative.

For more information, please visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatters](http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatters).

### d. Group Size and Teacher to Children Ratio

Both group size and teacher to children ratio affect the quality of care. In the following two tables, we list the size and ratio numbers according to Colorado State Licensing, National Association for The Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and those Sunset Academy.

Sunset Academy is committed to operating at group sizes and ratios equal or better than what is required by state licensing.

Under normal circumstances, we also operate at the stricter group size and ratio requirements of NAEYC. However, on days when we are short staffed, due to a number of reasons, including bad weather, high number of teachers calling out, background checking delays, or any other reason, we will take in as many as the state licensing rules allow us, so we can service as many families as allowed by the law.

Age of Children	Maximum Group Sizes		
	Colorado State	NAEYC	Sunset Academy
6 weeks to 12 months	10	8	10
12 months to 24 months	10	12	10
24 months to 36 months	14	12	10
2 ½ years to 3 years	16	20	16
3 years to 4 years	20	20	20
4 years to 5 years	24	20	20
5 years and older	30	24	24

Age of Children	Maximum Number of Children Per Teacher		
	Colorado State	NAEYC	Sunset Academy
6 weeks to 12 months	5	4	5
12 months to 24 months	5	6	5
24 months to 36 months	7	6	6
2 ½ years to 3 years	8	10	8
3 years to 4 years	10	10	10
4 years to 5 years	12	10	10
5 years and older	15	15	15

**e. Farm to Early Care & Education Program**

Sunset Academy participates in the “Farm to ECE” Program offered through Boulder County Public Health. It is a toolkit for early education providers. It incorporates farming, gardening, and nutrition into education program. The program includes weekly gardening activities, nutrition activities, and communication to parents regarding nutrition and program activities. Goals of the program are:

- To increase access to nutritious food and experiential opportunities in an effort to grow healthy children
- To positively influence the eating habits of young children while their food preferences are forming.

**f. Enhancements**

Parents can opt in with third-party provided enhancements. Currently the options include: Musicare. More or different options could be offered in the future.

## **5. Enrollment Policies & Procedures**

### **a. Admission & Registration Procedures**

We invite all prospective parents to take a virtual tour of our school at the beginning of their school-searching process. The virtual tool can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/about-us/virtual-tour/>

After the virtual tour, a parent usually requests a physical tour of the school. At the tour, the family will receive the enrollment forms.

If there is immediate availability and the parent needs care right away, the enrollment process is completed with submission of all enrollment paperwork.

If there is no immediate availability or the parent needs care at some point in the future, we put your child on our wait list.

### **b. Enrollment Material**

Enrollment material includes enrollment forms and other supporting materials. These are the required forms and paperwork:

- enrollment forms
- a copy of the child's official birth certificate
- an updated health appraisal
- proof of up-to-date immunizations
- proof of health insurance
- other forms that maybe required at the time

Enrollment forms are distributed to parents after the tour, together with this Parent Handbook, they are also available to download on our website at [www.sunsetacademy.com](http://www.sunsetacademy.com).

Per state regulations, enrollment papers must be completed before your child attends Sunset Academy. Immunization records must be on file within 5 days of enrollment and be kept up to date by the parent.

Health appraisals must be updated and submitted after each required well-child check according to recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule.

### **c. Initial Registration Fee**

An initial registration fee will be charged upon enrollment. Registration fees are not refundable. If you disenroll your child and re-enroll at some point in the future, a new registration fee will be charged.

### **d. Wait List**

In the event we do not space for you in the classroom desired or you do not need care within one month, we will put the child on our wait list. We require an initial registration fee along with your child's first week tuition to hold your spot. The registration fee and tuition are not refundable if you decide not to enroll your child at Sunset Academy on the agreed hold date.

Parents with at least one child already enrolled at Sunset Academy will have priority for the new child when a space becomes available. All openings are on a first come first served basis. Once you are notified of any openings you need to respond immediately.



## 6. Tuition Policies

### a. Tuition Rates Policies

Our current rate table can be obtained from the office and is typically posted on our website.

Sunset Academy is committed to providing high quality services at comparable rates as our peers in the city. These schools are considered having similar sizes to ours and offer comparable qualities.

Sunset Academy traditionally adjusts its tuition rates according to the market conditions in August each year, when the new school year starts.

School may adjust the tuition rates in the middle of a school year, depending on the economic and competition circumstances. The new rates only apply to parents who enroll after the rates change.

### b. Long-Term Commitment

You are making a long-term commitment for your child's education and the financial obligation is also long-term in nature. The reason we can keep our tuition at a relatively lower level is because many parents have made long-term commitments to our school. We aspire to build a school for such parents.

Our tuition has been prorated weekly in order to lessen the burden for the parents. This should not be interpreted as that you are paying for a weekly service and you can join and quit frequently.

Anytime you want to keep your child away from the school for an extended period of time and do not want to pay the full tuition, you are required to give us a notice 4 weeks before your child's absence. If you do not give us notice 4 weeks ahead of time, you are responsible for the full tuition for the entire 4 weeks from the date when you give us notice, even if your child is absent from the school during some or the entire period.

You can keep the spot by paying a fee according to the following table. The percentage of tuition you pay to keep your spot varies with the length of your child's absence. If you pay a fee to keep your spot, you will not be considered as a new enrollment, do not have to pay registration fee, and your original rate will continue.

In the notice you give us, please specify how long you intend to keep your child out of the school. We do not guarantee there is a spot for you if you return earlier than the date you asked for originally; and we will adjust the percentage to the higher value according to the actual length of absence if you return early.

Length of Absence	Percentage of Tuition to Pay
Less than one week	100%
1 to 2 weeks	75%
2 to 4 weeks	50%
Greater than 4 weeks	25%

For instances, if you ask for 6 school days of absence, you first week will be charged for 100% of tuition. Your 6<sup>th</sup> day absent from the school will be charged at 75% of the going rate. If you are asking for 12 school days of absence, your first week will be charged for 100% of the tuition; your second week at 75%; and your 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> day will be charged for 50% of the tuition.

On the other hand, if you give notice 4 weeks in advance and choose not to pay a fee to keep your spot, you lose your spot. When you return later and if there is still space available, your child will be considered as a new enrollment. You will then be required to pay a new registration fee. If the tuition rates are increased since last August, you will be charged at the new rates instead of enjoying the original lower rates.

### **c. Nine Hours Per Day Limit**

Tuition rates are discounted for parents who keep their children for a maximum of nine (9) hours of attendances per day. We believe that 9 hours per day spent at school approaches the limit that is considered healthy for children to stay away from their parents. When children spend more than 9 hours per day away from their parents for a long period of time, we observe challenging behaviors start to emerge.

We encourage you to evaluate your actual childcare requirements before enrolling your child with us; once enrolled, parents should make the best effort to stay within the 9 hours per day limit.

If your life situation changes in the future, and your child stays in the school for more than 9 hours each day on average for more than two weeks in a row, we will consider as a pattern of more service than normal has been established. In that case, we will discuss with you so either you can either cut the hours of attendance back to 9 hours or we will raise your tuition accordingly.

If more than 9 hours of care is necessary for long term, our full private pay tuition rate apply.

### **d. Annual Equipment Fee**

An annual equipment fee will be charged at the beginning of the school year, typically around the middle of August in order to update the classrooms and playground with new fixtures, equipment, playsets, toys, books, and other materials.

If you enrolled during the summer months, we will waive the first annual equipment fee. Your initial registration fee covers you till the next August.

### **e. Tuition for School Closure Days**

Parents pay tuition throughout the year, including for no-school days. No-school days are weekdays you do not send your child to school. These include:

- observed holidays and early-close days (see Part 2 for details)
- bad-weather days
- school or classroom closure due to pandemic, epidemic, or other infectious disease, as required by government agencies.
- any other day you choose not to send your child to school

If your child is enrolled in a part-time program and the no-school holiday falls on your scheduled day, tuition is charged for that day.

### **f. Sibling Discounts**

If a family has more than one child attending the full-time programs at Sunset Academy, the child(ren) besides the youngest child will each be given 5% discount on tuition.

Sibling discounts do not apply to part-time programs or Summer Camp/Holiday Breaks only students. In other words, if the sibling does not attend Sunset Academy during the regular school season and only attend during the Summer Camp/Holiday Breaks, no discounts will apply.

### **g. Tuition Payments**

Tuition is due on the first day of each week in the form of ACH withdrawal. Under very special circumstances, credit cards, personal check, cashier's check or money order will be accepted. We do not accept cash payment.

If tuition is not paid by end of the day of Friday, your child may not be admitted for the following week until full payment is received. Please contact the director if you need an extension of payment.

Parents are responsible for making good on all your payments. There will be a \$20.00 charge for each case of insufficient funds for ACH withdrawal or a bounced check. A cashier's check or money order will be required as payment when that happens.

#### **h. Payment Default**

In the event of a default in payment, you agree to pay, whether or not legal proceedings are instituted, a collection fee of up to 50% of the principal balance of any debt incurred hereunder and to pay all attorney fees, filing fees, service fees and court costs as a result of your default. You also agree to pay interest at the rate of 18% per annum on any account not paid when due.

Sunset Academy has engaged a law firm to explore all legal options to collect the debts that are due to us. We have won all cases so far to collect the defaulted tuitions.

#### **i. Payment Receipts & Year-End Statements**

You can obtain receipts and year-end statements is through our online portal <https://myprocare.com>.

Your user-id for your parent portal account is the email you leave in the enrollment forms. Please activate your account with the portal. In addition to viewing and printing receipts and statements, you can also check the accuracy of your transactions in your account in real time.

You may request receipts and year-end tax statements from the school's administrators. These tax statements will be available before the end of January.

## **7. Drop-Off & Pick-Up Policies**

#### **a. Program Hours**

Sunset Academy is open from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

During the time we are open, parents can choose the drop-off and pick-up times based on their family's needs. We ask you to drop off and pick up about the same time every day, and to keep total hours between the drop-off and pick-up below 9 hours in order to enjoy the discounted tuition.

#### **b. Attendance Notifications**

We strongly encourage you drop off your child before 9:00 AM every day. This ensures that your child experience all community learnings offered during the day in the classroom.

Please call the school by 9:00 am if you will be late in dropping off or your child will be absent for the day.

If you did not call by 9:00 am, we might release staff based on teacher/child ratios and your child might not be accepted for that day due to staff shortage. Therefore, if you did not call by 9:00 am and you still wanted to bring your child late during the day, please call the school first to determine if we are able to accept your child based on our staffing situation.

Parents of school age children must notify the school at least one hour in advance if a child does not need to be picked up at their primary school for that day.

#### **c. Arrival & Dismissal**

Please follow these arrival and dismissal policies:

- 1) Check In/Check Out

The state licensing rules require every child be checked in and checked out daily. We use Procare system for parents to check in and check out their children. You will choose your user-id and passcode on or before the first day of your child's attendance.

- 2) You will need to enter your unique combination of user-id and passcode to gain access to the building beyond the check-in area. Please do not open the door for others to enter. For everyone's safety all exit doors to each classrooms are locked
- 3) All children and their families should enter through the main front doors and children must be accompanied by an adult to the classroom. No child should be left unattended at any time in the hallways, parking lot, bathrooms, or classrooms.
- 4) Please check your child's cubby at the end of each day for projects and notes that need to go home. Children who attend full day classes should bring home their nap belongings at the end of each week to wash. Water bottles should go home daily to be washed/sanitized, and to be brought back to school the following day.

#### **d. Authorized People for Pick-Up**

A child may only be picked up by their parent/guardian or people authorized by their parent/guardian to pick up. You provide the list of authorized people on the enrollment forms. Proper identification is required of those authorized to pick up for the first time.

After enrollment, we must have a written authorization for any changes in authorized people for pick-up. To avoid any complications, please make sure your child's file reflects all authorized people allowed to pick up your child. It is your responsibility to update your child's file when changes are made.

#### **e. Late Pick-Up**

Sunset Academy expects that all children to be picked up promptly at the end of the school day according to that child's schedule. Parents who picked up their children late for any reason will be billed for late fees as outlined in the following procedure:

- 1) Any parent/guardian who anticipates arriving late for their child's pick-up must call to inform the school of the situation.
- 2) Sunset Academy uses the system time of Procare system as the official time standard. Parents are asked to synchronize their watches/clocks with the system time.
- 3) If a child is not picked up 30 minutes after our closing time, we will notify the Longmont Police Department and transport the child to the Police Department at 225 Kimbark Street, Longmont, Colorado.
- 4) Sunset Academy defines late pick-up as any pick-up one (1) minute after the end of the child's scheduled school day.
- 5) If the parent/guardian or authorized pick-up person is late (defined 1 minute after 6:00 PM), he/she will be charged \$1.00 per minute beginning with the first minute. The charge is based on the check-out time in the system and is automatic. No more authorization will be asked of the parent.

Parents who have multiple cases of late pick-up will be asked to meet with the director to discuss alternative arrangements, and/or continuing enrollment of their child.

## 8. Disciplinary Policies

All State of Colorado licensed childcare centers are required to have a disciplinary policy.

It is important to know that discipline is not the same as punishment. Discipline is a way to help children learn the safe ways to participate in class, express feelings, resolve conflicts, and solve problems peacefully.

Our school has adopted the *Pyramid Plus Approach* model as a positive behavior support system. The Pyramid Plus Approach promotes social-emotional competence for all children, and ensures nurturing and responsive relationships, high-quality supportive environments, and specific interventions for children with challenging behaviors.

Our disciplinary policy is based on clear expectations and is built on children's strengths. Our school-wide clear expectations (rules) include the following:

- We keep ourselves safe.
- We keep our friends safe.
- We keep our things safe.

We have developed clear expectations for moving from one area of the building to another, and for the playground as well, to ensure the safety of all. All expectations are taught and practiced throughout the year.

We use positive language (i.e.: "We use walking feet to keep ourselves safe" rather than "stop running"). We help students identify and express their own feelings and recognize feelings of others. We help children to find safe and acceptable ways to express their feelings.

Sunset Academy does not permit any form of corporal punishment.

If a child develops and demonstrates consistent challenging behaviors, we will develop a plan to address the behavior in collaboration with parents.

## 9. Medical & Health Policies

### a. Health Appraisal (Physical)

At registration, parents must submit a recent statement of the child's current health status signed by a healthcare professional who has seen the child according to the well-child check-up schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. A health form is included in the enrollment packet.

Parents are to schedule a physical when well-child checks are due, and to submit the updated health appraisal to Sunset Academy. Failure to provide proof of up-to-date immunizations and/or an updated physical as required may result in temporary exclusion.

### b. Immunization

Immunizations are important for your child and our community. Colorado law requires children attending a licensed childcare or preschool to be immunized against certain vaccine preventable diseases. To see a list of those immunizations that are required for childcare and preschool attendance, along with the recommended vaccines which provide more protection, please go to [www.coloradoimmunizations.com](http://www.coloradoimmunizations.com).

All children enrolled in our school are required to have written proof of immunizations prior to their first day of attendance. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that immunizations are up-to-date, and that Sunset Academy receives proof of updated immunizations throughout the year.

Sunset Academy only considers accepting medical exemptions for immunizations and this decision is made on a case-by-case basis. We currently do not accept immunization exemptions for personal or religious reasons.

Children with an exemption may be kept out of the school during a disease outbreak.

### **c. Medical Insurance**

Sunset Academy requires each child attending to have medical insurance and a medical home. The school provides information for families on where to obtain medical insurance if the you do not already have insurance.

The school recommend a list of local doctors you can call to establish a medical home:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/2020/12/27/establish-a-medical-home/>

We recommend you buy healthcare from Connect for Health Colorado. Details here:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/2020/12/26/where-to-buy-health-insurance/>

### **d. Policies on Exclusion from School Due to Illness**

The parent, legal guardian, or other authorized party shall be notified immediately when a child has any sign or symptom that requires temporary exclusion from Sunset Academy. When you are contacted, you should pick up your child within one hour!

Sunset Academy will temporarily exclude a child or send the child home as soon as possible if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- **Fever**, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility.

Fever is defined as an elevation of body temperature above normal. Oral temperatures above 101°F, in-ear temperatures above 101.5°F, or axillary (armpit)/temporal (forehead) temperatures above 100.1 °F are too high to be normal in children. The child should be fever free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Ibuprofen before returning to school

- **Diarrhea**, defined by watery stools, decreased form of stool that is not associated with changes of diet, and increased frequency of passing stool, that is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet. Children with diarrheal illness of infectious origin generally may be allowed to return to school once the diarrhea resolves, or when the health care provider has determined the child may return to the facility. If your child has diarrhea during the school day, we will ask that you pick your child up and not return to school for at least 24 hours after the last time your child has had diarrhea, or one entire school day.
- **Vomiting**, defined as the forceful expulsion of the contents of one's stomach through the mouth and sometimes the nose. If your child vomits during the school day, we will ask that you pick your child up and not return to school for at least 24 hours after the last time your child vomits, or one entire school day.
- **Thick White, Green or Yellow Discharge:** Children will be sent home if they appear to have any thick white, green, or yellow discharge. This is often indicative of an infection, and they must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they will need an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor and at least 24 hours of treatment. If in fact they do not have an infection we require a doctor's note with a diagnosis and clearance that it is not contagious.

- **Purulent conjunctivitis** (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until after treatment has been initiated. If the physician prescribes eye drops, the child may return to school 24 hours after this treatment begins. If eye drops are not used, the child may return to school when discharge from the eye is no longer present. In cases of non-purulent pink eye, exclusion shall be required only if the healthcare provider recommends it.
- **Pediculosis** (Live head lice/Nits): Child may return after treatment is complete, including removal of nits.
- **Pertussis** (whooping cough): signs and symptoms of possible severe illness until medical professional evaluation find the child able to be included at the facility. Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness shall include: lethargy that is more than expected tiredness, uncontrolled coughing, and difficult breathing, or wheezing,

Children without a fever who have mild symptoms associated with the common cold, sore throat, croup, bronchitis, rhinitis (runny nose), or otitis media (ear infection) will not sent home from school, or separated from other children in the facility unless their illness is characterized by one or more of the following conditions:

- The illness has a specified cause that requires exclusion, as determined by other specific conditions as listed above.
- The illness limits the child's comfortable participation in childcare activities;
- The illness results in a need for more care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

#### **e. Returning to School After Illness**

If a child has been diagnosed with any of the following illnesses, these timelines must be followed before they return to school. The general rule is 24 hours **after** the symptoms subside:

- Pediculosis (Live head lice/Nits), they may return after treatment is completed and all nits have been removed. The child may be checked by the administrative staff.
- Scabies, they may return after treatment has been completed.
- Impetigo, they may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, they may return 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and no fever present. The child should be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- Varicella-Zoster (Chickenpox), they may return after all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
- Pertussis (whooping cough), they may return after treatment has been completed.

Sunset Academy reserves the right to require parents to consult with the child's health care provider and request a written diagnosis and release to return to school from the health care provider.

#### **f. Outbreak of Communicable Child Disease**

If there is an outbreak of a communicable childhood disease (i.e. chicken pox, pertussis,) those children who have not been immunized against those illnesses shall be excluded from class and their parents will be notified. They shall not return to school until the outbreak is over.

#### **g. Medication Administration**

Any drug or medicine administered to your child while on our premises must be in the original container showing the appropriate dosage instructions prescribed by a physician. Your doctor will need to provide us a form for its administration per instance. No standing orders are allowed. Each drug order must have specific dates and instructions per instance. Only staff certified in medicine administration will administer your child's medication.

Epi-pens and emergency medications are stored in the individual classrooms behind a locked cabinet door. Emergency medications are placed in a clear medication bag and hung in the cabinet for easy access. All other medication is placed in a locked box in that same cabinet. Trained staff in Medication administration are always on site to administer medications. Sunset Academy reviews all medications and care plans monthly for expiration dates.

Any change in the original medication authorization requires a new written order by the prescribing practitioner and a change in the prescription label.

Sunscreen, lip balm and lotion does not need a physician's order if the skin is not broken, but permission to administer these must be in writing and signed by a parent. You must provide the sunscreen; lip balm or lotion and it must be labeled with your child's first and last name on the container, along with an expiration date.

It is the policy of the school that sunscreen be applied to your child before you drop them off at the school on days you child will be going outside. We will then reapply 20 minutes before going outside and if we stay outdoors for longer than 2 hours (field trips) we will then reapply again. Spray sunscreen is prohibited.

#### **h. Allergies**

It is essential for you to keep us informed of any allergies or sensitivities affecting your child.

Although this is a question on your medical form, sometimes allergies develop as the result of illness or medications. Please make sure that you report all changes in your child's medical profile to the office and classroom teacher.

#### **i. Rest Time**

All toddlers, pre-school and pre-kindergarten children take rest time after lunch. This is a time for children to relax. All children should be encouraged to rest for at least thirty minutes (30). When children have outgrown nap time they will not be forced to sleep. Children who do not sleep after 30 minutes will be allowed to move to another area and be provided with quiet toys and equipment to play with such as puzzles or books. Children will be allowed to leave their napping area within 10 minutes of waking. We provide your child with their own cot/crib which is sanitized weekly. Parents will be asked to furnish a small blanket labeled with your child's name. Please take it home and clean it weekly.

#### **j. Safe Sleep for Infants**

All staff members who work with children 12 months and younger must complete a course annually entitled "*Prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Safe Sleep Practices*".

Blankets will not be used when children sleep for children under the age of 12 months. They will be put to sleep on their backs, and infants will be offered pacifiers for comfort if needed. If children fall asleep in a space other than a crib, children will be moved to a crib. Sleep sacks are permitted.

#### **k. Smoke Free Environment**

Sunset Academy is a smoke-free environment for the protection of our children. This includes no smoking in the parking lot (even in vehicles). Even smoke that lingers on clothing and other materials can be detrimental to children.



If a staff member is smoker, they will be required to change their clothing before entering a classroom. If a child's clothing or backpack smells like smoke when the child arrives, staff may change the child's clothing, and put the smoky clothing in a sealed container to send home with the parent at the end of the day.

### **l. Outdoor Play and Excessively Hot Weather**

Children are scheduled to go outside each day except in cases of extreme weather. Extreme weather is described as below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees. Please remember to send appropriate clothing for weather conditions every day (i.e., boots, hats, mittens, sun hat, etc.).

Excessively hot weather: Sunset Academy is air-conditioned throughout, so school will not be cancelled unless the air conditioning fails when the temperature is extremely hot. In that case, parents will be notified to pick up, and children will be kept comfortable with water play, under the shade or indoors. If it is too hot for children to play outdoors (above 90 degrees), additional gross motor equipment will be available for children to play in their own classroom.

Due to allergies and sensitivities parents are asked to apply sunscreen and insect repellent before bringing their children to school. If your child requires use of a specific sunscreen, please provide sunscreen to be stored in the child's classroom. This sunscreen needs to be labeled with your child's first and last name. Sunset Academy will reapply sunscreen for afternoon outdoor activities.

### **m. Policy on Diapering & Toilet Procedures**

For Infants and toddler, diapers are checked every hour and are changed as soon as they become soiled using universal precautions. Preschool children are changed at a minimum of once every three hours (or more often as needed). Staff members are required to wear disposable gloves for each change. Children are required to use appropriate hand washing techniques (with assistance as necessary) after changes of diapers and/or toileting.

During potty training, children are taken to bathroom every 30-45 minutes throughout the day. Children will be potty-trained depending on developmental readiness. Preschool aged children are basically self-sufficient in their bathroom skills. A staff member monitors bathroom use when the children are present. If children soil themselves their clothes will be changed accordingly.

Children can access bathroom for toileting as needed. All children are encouraged to be as independent as possible, while assistance is available as needed for clothing adjustments and hand washing. Staff will follow recommended procedures for hand washing and diapering as outlined in the Colorado Minimum Rules and Regulations for Childcare Centers.

### **n. Other Healthcare Needs**

Please see the director regarding other healthcare needs. Individual health care plans signed by a physician must be on file for children requiring additional support/intervention (including, but not limited to: asthma, seizures, diabetes, severe allergies, special diet).

Training of appropriate staff is provided by Sunset Academy's health consultant, a licensed registered nurse, who is on site at least once a month.

## **10. Safety Policies**

### **a. Procedure for Identifying Where Children Are at All Times**

Sunset Academy's procedure for ensuring that we always know where children are is as follows:

All parents are required to clock-in upon arrival, and to walk their child to the classroom. Likewise, parents are required to clock the child out before departing with the child at the end of the day.

After your child is dropped off (checked-in) and until the time he/she is picked up (checked-out), your child will be under the direct supervision of the lead teacher and the teacher assistant of the classroom. At all times, it is the classroom teachers' responsibility to know who is working with/supervising a child.

Once your child has been picked up and clocked-out by the parent/guardian, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise the child. Please be sure that your child remains with you while entering and exiting the building. Please be sure that your child is always within your reach.

When children go outside for a walk, teachers carry the class list in the first aid kit, and sign out at the front desk. The sign out form has the following information: number of children leaving, initials of children, cell phone of teacher, and emergency medications and health care plans if applicable. Upon re-entry, the teachers sign the children back in.

### **b. Field Trips**

Field trips and special activities are part of the program for the school age children. We do not have any field trips and special activities outside of the school planned for the younger age programs.

Your give permission for your child to participate in field trips in the enrollment package. You will be notified in advance of any trips and you will have the opportunity to pull your child out of any specific trip. If your child does not participate in the group field trips, they will be placed in the closest age group for care until their group has returned. Supervisor ratios will be maintained for all field trips and special events based on the age group.

### **c. Transportation**

Sunset Academy provides transportation for all field trips and special activities for our school age program. Each child will be provided a seat belt or child safety seat according to the guidelines of Colorado Law.

The teachers who transport the children will carry a cell phone along with the emergency contact phone numbers for each child who is attending the field trip. If at any time your child becomes separated from the group for any reason, the appropriate authority along with the parent will be notified immediately. Children will be supervised by teachers from their classroom at state ratio or better. Parent chaperones are always welcome.

In case the school is under an emergency evacuation response, your child may be transported in our vans or in private vehicles to the pre-designated sites. Age appropriate child safety seats may not be available for all children during the evacuation but they will be secured with seat belts while being transported to safety.

### **d. Visitor Policy**

Sunset Academy encourages you to visit the school and participate with your child at any time. For new parents we encourage you to wait until your child has passed the adjustment period, as this can be stressful time for both the parent and child. Please be respectful of the nap schedule in your child's classroom and schedule your visit accordingly.

All visitors must check in at the office and will be asked about the purpose of the visit upon arrival. After presenting their current photo ID, visitors will be asked to sign the visitor log located on the counter in the

front foyer. The visitor will then be given a visitor's pass and will be escorted to the appropriate area. Before leaving Sunset Academy, visitors will check out with administrative staff, sign out, and return the visitor's pass.

#### **e. Incapacitated Parents**

If any parent is intoxicated or appears to be under the influence of drugs while on Sunset Academy property, they will be directed to call another parent to transport their child from the school. If we feel that your child is in any danger, we will not let you take them from the school. The appropriate local authorities will be contacted for intervention.

#### **f. Weapons**

Sunset Academy is committed to providing a safe work and learning environment. Therefore, any possession and/or use of weapons, explosives, fireworks, or other objects designed and/or used to inflict injury or damage is prohibited while on Sunset Academy property. This includes, but is not limited to, items that simulate such dangerous objects. The possession of non-lethal self-defense instruments is not prohibited; however, reckless use of such devices will be considered a violation of this policy.

### **11. Emergency Procedures & Policies**

#### **a. Emergency Preparedness Plan Handbook**

Sunset Academy maintains an Emergency Preparedness Plan Handbook, a copy of which is placed above the main sign in/out desk and made available for parents to review. This handbook may change as we change the procedures.

#### **b. First Aid Emergency Response**

In case of accidental injury or severe illness, we will immediately contact the child's parents/guardians. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The child will be kept up front until either the parent/guardian arrives or the ambulance. The school will maintain parents' signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

Our staff will document any injury sustained by your child, and you will receive a copy. If your child is injured and requires medical intervention, parents will be contacted immediately, and a follow up report will be filed with Social Services.

You are required to keep the school up to date on phone numbers and carrier information, emergency numbers and other pertinent information. Social Services agency requires all this information to be updated and checked yearly. You will be given new forms annually to satisfy this requirement but if your contact information changes during the year, you are required to update your child's records to reflect your new contact information.

#### **c. Lost Children Policies**

While we have never had a "lost child incident" at Sunset Academy, we feel that it is important to always be prepared. Therefore, if a child should become lost from the group, law enforcement agencies and parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

#### **d. Fires**

Fire safety evacuation plans are posted in each room. All children will be accounted through the active classroom roster (the sign in/out sheet) which will be taken with each classroom as they vacate the building. Once the building is cleared by the Longmont Fire Department for safe occupancy the children will return to their classroom.

If the school is not cleared for occupancy, we will keep the children in a safe place and call the parents for pickup. Currently, arrangements have been made with the Sunset Middle School (located within walking distance of Sunset Academy) to house the children. Children will remain supervised until their parents are

notified and all children have been picked up. The address for the Sunset Middle School is 1300 S. Sunset St., Longmont.

**e. Tornadoes**

In the case of a tornado, all children will be escorted to an area with no exterior windows. The children will be placed on the floor and tarps are used for protection against broken glass or falling items. Once the threat has passed, they will return to their classrooms.

If the school is damaged by the tornado, all children will be removed from the school as soon as possible and gathered in a preapproved safe place away from the building, where we can wait the parents for pickup. Our pre-designated safe place is the Longmont Recreation Center. Children will remain supervised until their parents are notified and all children have been picked up. The address for Longmont Recreation Center is: 310 Quail Road, Longmont CO 80501.

**f. School Closings Due to On-site Emergency**

Like in a fire, during any other emergency evacuation of the building, arrangements have been made with the Sunset Middle School (located within walking distance of Sunset Academy) to house the children. Children will remain supervised until they have been picked up by parents. The address for the Sunset Middle School 1300 South Sunset Street Longmont, CO 80501, Phone: 303-776-3963

**g. Evacuation Due to Emergency in the Immediate Area**

Like in a tornado, in the event that Sunset Academy must be evacuated due to an emergency in the immediate area, the staff and children will be transported to the Longmont Recreation Center. Children will remain supervised until their parents can be notified and all children have been picked up. The address for Longmont Recreation Center is: 310 Quail Road, Longmont CO 80501.

**12. Inclement Weather Policies**

**a. School Closes Due to Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, the school will follow the decision of St. Vrain Valley School District on whether to close the school, whether to close early or open late, and whether to cancel certain activities. We will send parents email and text message informing you of the decision as soon as the school district announces its decision.

If the weather worsens while your child is at school, you are welcome to pick up your child early. If bad weather causes you to be late picking up your child, please let the office know as soon as possible.

The school does not refund tuition if we close due to inclement weather.

**b. School Stays Open Under Inclement Weather**

Following the school district's decision, we may decide to open even on days of inclement weather. On such days, we may open late or close early, please stay tuned for our announcements on our website, social media, email, and text messages.

On such days, some of our staff may be unable to get to the school on time, and some may not be able to come at all. As a result, we cannot guarantee that we have capacity for all children who need care. For parents that must work, we will take as many children as we have staff for.

Children will be accepted into the school on first-come-first-serve basis. We will start a waiting line while waiting for more staff members to arrive.

## **13. Children's Personal Belongings Policies**

### **a. Cubbies:**

Each child will be assigned a cubby upon enrollment. This provides storage for clothing, papers or activities completed throughout the day. Please check your child's cubby every day. It may also contain information of upcoming events or changes within the school operations.

### **b. Personal Belongings and Money**

Children shall not bring money to school unless specifically requested. Staff cannot be responsible for personal belongings that are valuable brought from home. Bringing toys from home is discouraged unless approved by the classroom teacher in advance.

### **c. Change of Clothes**

Sunset Academy children have fun, and sometimes having fun gets messy! Please provide a complete spare set of clothes (socks, underwear, pants or shorts, shoes, and a top) that can remain at the school. We ask that parents of infants and toddlers provide two sets of change of clothing. The clothes will be stored in your child's cubby. Please replenish the items when they have been used, during seasonal changes, and as your child grows throughout the year. Please be sure to label every article of clothing with first and last name.

### **d. Diapers**

Children are not required to be toilet trained to be enrolled at Sunset Academy. A toilet-training program can be discussed with the child's teacher regarding readiness.

If your child uses diapers, you are required to supply disposable or cloth diapers to ensure that we are using the ones that are best for your child. If you provide cloth diapers you must also provide a proper receptacle. We will place a note in your child's cubby when the supply is running low. Parents of children in diapers or pull-ups should supply a container of wet wipes, and to replenish as needed.

### **e. Lost & Found**

Please check with management for any missing items. After a few weeks, the items will be considered unclaimed and will be removed from the school.

## **14. Voluntary Disenrollment Policies**

Parents can disenroll a child voluntarily from the school. If you decide to withdraw your child from the school, you are required to give a 4-week written notice directly to the director or assistant director. Do not give the written notice to your child's lead teacher or teacher assistants.

If a 4-week written notice is not given, you will be charged and are responsible for paying the tuition during this notice period. If your account is not paid in full by your removal date, the balance will be sent to a collection agency and all fees, interest and penalties will be charged.

## **15. Involuntary Disenrollment Policies**

We reserve the right to disenroll any child and/or family who is having a hard time adapting to the rules of Sunset Academy. In the event this does happen, we will try to give you ample time to find alternate care (no more than two weeks).

If this disenrollment is due to physical or verbal abuse to another child or staff, or your child have the tendency to hurt himself/herself, you will be asked to remove the child immediately.

Sunset Academy's childcare programs are centered on the children for whom we care. We seek to provide programs designed to support each child's development and to encourage them to learn. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is important for us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program.

Sunset Academy seeks a solid partnership with our families as a basis for their children's success within our program. Because Sunset Academy's child-centered/family approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, it is only on rare occasions that a child's/family's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for either a short term or permanent basis. We will do everything possible to work with you to avoid a child's disenrollment from the school.

### **a. Reasons for Involuntary Disenrollment**

The following are some reasons why we would have to disenroll a child or a family from the school.

Child's Actions:

- Child unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time (one month).
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Ongoing uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Excessive biting (see "Temporary Exclusion Due to Biting" below)

Parental Actions:

- Failing to abide by school policies or requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- Non-payment of tuition.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and cannot reasonably be delivered by the program. This includes requests that depart from the philosophy of Sunset Academy's program

Immediate Causes for Disenrollment:

- A parent/guardian or a child is physically or verbally abusive or intimidating towards school staff, other children, or anyone else at the school.
- Potentially dangerous behavior by a parent/child or guardian towards themselves, school staff, children, or anyone else at the school.

### **b. Working Towards a Positive Solution**

The decision to disenroll a child from Sunset Academy is a difficult one for both the school and the family. In all cases, Sunset Academy's objective is to act quickly, thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. School personnel will attempt to work with the family to take constructive steps to find a suitable solution that resolves the problem(s), before a disenrollment occurs.

When a child's teacher or an administrator has concerns over a child's behavior or other circumstances, he or she will document such concerns as soon as they arise. The school will inform the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls, or meetings.

If the child's behavior is problematic, a review of that behavior using the school's developmental profile and other developmental tools will aid in understanding the behavior in its appropriate context. This review includes input from several teachers and administrators, as analysis of the issue will involve multiple perspectives.

As the school develops strategies to address a child's problem, a variety of options should be considered, including:

- changes to the physical environment
- the daily structure of activities

- consistency
- transition times
- redirection

Similarly, teachers' expectations, home classroom management skills, and intervention techniques should be evaluated and changed to adapt to the circumstances.

Support is available for parents on how they might integrate the plan at home by adjusting their interactions or expectations for the child. Literature and other support resources on behavior improvement will be provided to the family, if available.

Parent conferences will be held to review the problematic behaviors and the progress of the plan implemented to resolve them. It is the school's goal to provide the parents sufficient time to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at the school and to provide them with sufficient notice of the potential for disenrollment, so they can secure alternative care.

When appropriate, we may suggest an evaluation by a professional consultant to come in and observe the child in the home classroom base environment.

Ultimately, Sunset Academy personnel will attempt a number of approaches before making the final decision to suspend or disenroll a child from the school.

### **c. Disenrollment Process**

If we could not resolve the problematic behavior after exhausting all remedial action, the school will call a conference with the child's parent/guardian to communicate the school's decision to disenroll. As the end of conference, the school will follow up with a disenrollment notice that specifies the following:

- the reasons for the disenrollment or suspension;
- the date of disenrollment or length of suspension, giving the family sufficient time to seek alternative care (up to two weeks, depending on safety risks presented);
- the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return or to resume or continue enrollment at the school;
- the avenue for appealing the decision to disenroll within Sunset Academy's management;

### **d. The Appeal Process**

A parent/guardian may appeal the school's decision to remove a child from the school, even when the removal is immediate. The parent/guardian should submit the appeal in writing to the director, in care of the school. The appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days of the school's notice to the family of the decision to disenroll. The parent/guardian should describe the basis for their disagreement with the decision and to provide any supporting documents in the written appeal so their position can be fully considered.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the director will review it and will provide a response to the family within thirty (30) days.

### **e. Temporary Exclusion Due to Biting**

Biting is a natural part of children's development. One in ten toddlers will bite spontaneously. There are a variety of reasons for biting.

When a child starts biting the other children, we try to find the reasons. We will chart the biting behavior for two weeks. Once this is done, we will have a conference with the parents. During the conference we as a team

(parents, lead teachers and aides) will come up with a plan to decrease the biting. This plan may be developed by outside sources as we seek help to come up with an action plan. If biting does not subside, we may ask the parents to exclude their child temporarily from the school until the biting is under control. This is for the safety of all the children and staff involved.

#### **f. No Retaliation Disenrollment**

Sunset Academy pledges not to disenroll a child based solely on the following actions by the parents:

- making a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a school's alleged violations of the licensing requirements
- reporting abuse or neglect occurring at the school
- questioning the school regarding policies and procedures

## **16. Healthy Food Program Policies**

Meal & snack time is an important part of your child's day. Besides the nutritional value, meal & snack time offers an opportunity to observe, learn, and practice self-help and social skills.

#### **a. No Nuts Policy**

**\*\*NO NUTS** (peanut OR tree nut) – Due to severe allergies of some of the children and staff, Sunset Academy is a nut-free environment. Snacks and birthday treats brought in must be store-bought (with a list of ingredients still attached). Before bringing in any food to share with the class, please ask your child's teacher about any specific food restrictions.

#### **b. Daily Food Program**

Sunset Academy provides lunch as well as a mid-afternoon snack for the children enrolled in the school. Lunch and snack menus in the Procure App, in each classroom and at the front desk. Our menus are designed to meet the daily nutritional needs of children.

Any allergies must be recorded as well as individualized dietary requirements. Every attempt will be made to accommodate your child's need.

**Infants:** Parents of infants provide formula or breast milk in bottles every day. Each bottle must be labeled with the child's name and the date. Sunset Academy will provide baby food and cereals for our infants. If you prefer a certain brand for your infant and we do not serve, you will be responsible for providing it.

#### **c. Special Diets**

If your child is on a highly restricted diet: gluten free or multiple intolerances to food and food ingredients, it is important for you to contact director directly to discuss options. You are required to supply all of the additional food for your child.

If you do not like the food we offer and choose to provide your own, you must provide your child with nutritious, balanced food, free from nuts of any kind.

#### **d. Nutrition**

The following is information that will be helpful information about our snack and lunch menu, and guidelines for celebrations at Sunset.

##### **1) Fruits and Vegetables**

- We offer fruit to children each week as part of our snack and lunch menu.



- We offer fruit canned in its own juice, fresh fruit, and/or frozen fruit as part of our snack and lunch menu very week.
- We offer fresh vegetables to children every week as part of our snack and lunch menu.

## 2) Grains

- We offer whole grain choices at snack and lunch every week.
- We offer beans monthly at snack and lunch.
- We offer only a “sweet” option in the form of pudding, graham crackers, or animal crackers no more than once every week.

## 3) Dairy

- We offer dairy at snack and lunch weekly, such as cheese, yogurt, and milk.
- Milk served to preschool students is low fat (1%) milk.

## 4) Beverages

- We make drinking water freely available so children can serve themselves both inside and outdoors. Parents provide individual water bottles for their children. Children are encouraged to drink throughout the day.
- We do not offer sweetened beverages to students during the program day.

## 5) Menus and Variety

- Our snack and lunch menus include healthy items from a variety of cultures.
- Our snack and lunch menus include a combination of new and familiar foods.

## e. Feeding Practices

- Our staff members ask children if they are full before removing their plate.
- Our staff members ask children determine if they are still hungry before serving more food
- Our staff gently and positively encourage children to try a new or less preferred food.
- We do not use food to encourage positive behavior.

## f. Supporting Healthy Eating

- Our staff joins children at the table at snack time.
- Our staff often talks informally with the children about trying and enjoying healthy foods.
- If parents provide their child’s lunch, we encourage parents to provide fruit, vegetables, protein, whole grain, and dairy (including milk) for their child’s lunch.
- We plant a garden every year. Children enjoy fresh vegetables from the garden.
- We participate in the Farm to ECE program. Nutrition Education for staff, children and parents
- We provide training opportunities for staff on nutrition at least once a year.
- We provide nutrition education to parents at least once a year.

## g. Food and Snacks from Home

Sunset provides snacks and lunch that encourage healthy eating and trying new foods. We ask that parents do not their own snacks for their children. If you have specific reasons (i.e. food sensitivity or allergy) to send snacks, please discuss options with the director and assistant director in advance.

In any case we ask that parents to refrain from sending these snacks: cookies, candy, processed “fruit snacks”, cake, sugary drinks, and other foods high in salt and sugar. We encourage parents to send fresh fruits and vegetables.

## **h. Healthy Guidelines for Celebrations**

We encourage parents to join us for the child's birthday or other special occasions. If food is part of the celebration at school, please plan with your child's teacher in advance. Please select healthier food options that your child enjoys. Suggestions include:

- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables and dip
- Fresh vegetables and hummus
- Cheese & whole grain crackers
- Lower fat baked goods (ex. whole grain muffins)
- Healthy foods in fun shapes

Food at a celebration that will be "shared" must be prepared & packaged in a commercial kitchen. We will not serve homemade foods. Please plan with your child's teacher in advance.

Also, consider celebrating with favorite stories, music, games, age-appropriate "trinkets", or activities. The most important thing to your child is that you took the time to help plan something special. Please talk with the director or assistant director if you have questions or need ideas.

## **17. Primary Caregiving & Transition Policies**

### **a. Primary Caregiving**

We use a "Primary Caregiving" model in providing care. Under this model each classroom has at least two full time teachers/assistant teachers. Though from time to time we have floater teachers providing care to children in the classroom, these two teachers are assigned as primary caregivers to the children in the classroom. These take the lead responsibility for ongoing assessment and ongoing communication with parents.

### **b. Transitions**

#### **1) Home to School Transition**

Transition from home to school can be stressful for both parent and the child. The importance of parents' involvement in their child's transition from home to school cannot be stressed enough. With the support of a caring parent, this transition can be a positive experience for a child, giving him or her a sense of self-confidence and accomplishment. To make the transition a positive experience, we have the following suggestion for the parents:

- Give your child opportunities to leave you and spend time fun times with other adults and children.
- Talk about school in positive ways.
- Give your child opportunities to play with items like scissors, crayons, pencils, markers, paint and paper.
- Read books to your child and talk about the pictures and the story.
- Encourage your child's independence by letting him follow simple directions and by letting him do tasks on his own.
- Take your child to visit our school. Playing on the playground, touring the building, and finding the bathrooms are helpful activities.
- Ask your child what she thinks school will be like. You may learn that your child understands what to expect, or you may find that she has unrealistic fears or misunderstandings. Listen and talk about school.
- Expect your child's transition to be successful. Remember the adjustment will take time.
- Your positive outlook can help your child; let him know you are confident in his ability to do well.

Between the time when you turn in your enrollment material and your child's first day at school, we would like to meet you to discuss the details on how to have a smooth transition from home to school. We would also like to arrange you to meet the lead teacher in your child's classroom so you can ask any questions you may have on our program.

## **2) Transition Between Classrooms**

Transitions are based on individual readiness and age. These are the times when we transition a child from one classroom to another:

- Infants who have learned to crawl transition to the second infant classroom
- Infants who have learned to walk transition to the Toddlers Program;
- Younger toddlers transition to the older toddlers' classroom when they turn 2 years old
- Toddlers older than 30 months transition to Pre-School Program when they are potty trained
- Pre-school children to Pre-Kindergarten program at the beginning of the school year at the same
- Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten program at the beginning of the school year after turning 5 years old.

Before we transition your child to an upper class based on individual readiness, the director will talk to you about your child's readiness. We will initiate the transition process after we obtain your consensus. During the transition period, we will let your child "visit" the upper class for a couple of hours each day for a week. At the end of the transition period, the receiving classroom teacher will decide whether your child is ready for transition.

Each year, the school will have a school-wide session to give information specifically on transition. Topics include what to expect in terms of transitions from one classroom to another, from home to classroom, to another setting. The information session is to work with parents to help child adjust to new settings.

## **18. Screen Time & Physical Activity Policies**

In Sunset Academy, we restrict children's screen time and encourage active play.

### **a. Restrict Screen Time**

TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others. Limiting screen time encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. Therefore, we will restrict screen time by:

- Having ZERO screen time (iPad, video, and computer) for children under the age of two years for entertainment purposes.
- Not allowing screen time during meals and snacks
- Allowing no more than 15 minutes of educational computer/tablet time per day
- Allowing a maximum of 30 minutes total per week of educational and age appropriate screen time
- Non-educational screen time will not be used at Sunset Academy.

### **b. Encourage Active Play**

At Sunset Academy, we understand that active play is important for healthy growth and development of young children. Therefore:

- If weather is permissible, children attending a full day program will receive at least 60 minutes of outdoor play daily, in addition to 45 minutes of indoor gross motor activity (active play).
- Teacher-led structured physical activities are so scheduled that they meet these criteria: Once in a three (3) hour or less time period; twice in a five (5) hour or more time period.
- If weather is not permissible, full time students will receive at least 90 minutes of active indoor play.

- We will **not** withhold physical activity as a punishment.
- We will provide opportunities for physical activity education for parents and staff.
- We will consider physical activity as a positive consequence.
- We encourage children to be active, and staff members join children in active play

## 19. Universal Screening, Assessment and Intervention

With the assistance of families and community partners, Sunset Academy ensures and documents that each child receives a hearing, vision, and dental screening. We also ensure and document each child receives a developmental screening from a medical profession. In case you need resources to obtain the screening, here are some resources:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/category/parent-resources/health-safety-and-nutrition/>

Throughout the year, our teachers use developmentally appropriate assessment tools for all children, including Teaching Strategies GOLD, and ongoing observation in multiple settings to monitor progress in all areas of every child's development. In collaboration with parents, individual goals are created based on observations at school and at home, and specific strategies are implemented to aid in success. The greatest success stories for all children occur when parents partner with staff to implement similar successful strategies at home.

When it becomes evident, through universal screening, ongoing observation and Teaching Strategies GOLD data, that there is a need for additional support for a child to be successful, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) An initial conference will be held, during which all team members will meet to share observations, thoughts, questions, successful strategies, and need for additional support. A successful team must include the parent, teacher, as well as the teacher assistant, director, and other parties as appropriate, based on the individual child's need for additional support. It is expected that all members of the team disclose and discuss all pertinent information, including outside testing results as applicable.
- 2) All team members should work collaboratively to establish goals and agree upon a *plan* in the home and school settings. All members of the team agree that they share responsibility for successful implementation of the plan, and ultimately the success of the child. The parent is always an integral part of the team.
- 3) Any changes to services and supports will be discussed as a team and decisions will be made as a team.
- 4) When the team comes to the conclusion that professional help is needed, we will make referral for you to seek such help outside of the school.

Some community based program can be find here:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/community-based-programs/>

And medical professionals here:

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/2020/12/27/establish-a-medical-home/>

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/2020/12/27/dental-care/>

<https://www.sunsetacademy.com/2020/12/27/infantsee-program/>

- 5) When a child is struggling due to challenging behaviors that interfere with the safety of self and/or others or require intense and/or frequent one-on-one support at school, the team will meet to create

a Behavior Support Plan. The team will reconvene, as often as necessary, to review progress and make changes to the plan. All members of the team agree that they share responsibility for successful implementation of the plan, and ultimately the success of the child.

- 6) Open communication and collaboration between home and school are critical components for a child's success, if team members are unable to agree upon and implement a plan successfully, it may be determined that Sunset Academy is not a "good fit" for the individual child.

Our goal is to achieve Sunset's mission, provide a safe environment conducive to learning for all, and to ensure success for all students through implementation of a collaborative, team approach and family-school partnership. Sunset Academy reserves the right to exclude a student due to ongoing safety concerns resulting from the individual child's needs, and/or the inability of the program to provide substantial 1:1 support for an individual child's needs

## **20. School & Parents Communications**

We deliver our communication to parents through paper copies in cubbies, snail mail, email, text message, and social media posts.

### **a. Keep Your Contact Information Current**

Social Services requires all contact information to be updated and checked yearly. You will be given new forms annually to satisfy this requirement. If your contact information changes during the year, you are required to update your child's records to reflect your new contact information.

You are required to keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information.

Our parent portal allows parents to update some contact information such as your telephone numbers and mailing address online. Please activate your account at <https://myprocare.com>. If your email address has changed, you need to contact the school to have it changed.

### **b. Monthly Communications**

Our Monthly Parent Newsletters are sent home either by email or in your child's cubby. The newsletter illustrates activities children have been participating in, upcoming events and important notices. Your teacher will post weekly lesson plans and classroom's arrangements outside your child's classroom.

### **c. Progress Reports**

Sunset Academy will perform developmental evaluations at least 2 times a year for each child at the school except the school age children. You will have the opportunity to meet with the lead teacher, director or assistant director to discuss in detail your concern about your child's development. You may request a conference with your child's teacher and/or the director at any time if you are concerned about your child for any reason.

### **d. Back to School Night**

An orientation is scheduled in August each year for parents and students. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to attend.

### **e. Parent Toolkit Nights**

Parent Toolkit Nights are scheduled throughout the year and are based on topics of interest and need which are determined by parent survey results collected in August/ September of each new program year.

### **f. Resolution of Concerns & Complaints**

In any school, there may be times when a parent is not satisfied with a situation. Sunset Academy's goal is to support a relationship between you and your child's teacher that will enable you to resolve concerns or differences. Therefore, you're encouraged to talk to your child's teacher first to resolve any concerns you may have. Generally, this discussion should be held when you identify the issue or concern, or within 3-5 days if you are responding to a specific incident. Most concerns should be able to be resolved in this manner.

If your concerns are not resolved, or you have concerns that you are unable to talk about with your child's teacher, you are encouraged to take your concerns to the director. Should you not be satisfied after speaking with the director, you may take your concerns to the owner and president of the school.

## **21. School & Parents Partnership Policies**

Our goal in our relationship with parents is to establish and maintain a collaborative relationship with each child's family in order to maximize the child's development.

To reach our goal we must work cooperatively with parents. We encourage parents to become involved with the school and invite suggestions and comments to improve our programs. These interactions aid our goal for the children to feel important about themselves and to give them a sense of pride and accomplishment.

### **a. Opportunities for Partnership**

As a Sunset Academy parent, you have plenty of opportunities to build a strong family-school partnership with us. Here are some examples that could happen during the year:

- visit classrooms
- participate with field trips
- attend school-wide events and parties
- volunteer in school activities
- participate in surveys initiated by the school
- attend parent/teacher conferences twice a year
- attend the educational information sessions on child development and learning that are organized by the school
- serve as members or assume leadership positions on Parent Advisory Board
- attend the series of parenting classes that are organized by the school. This classes includes goal setting and action plans.
- provide genuine, respectful, constructive and helpful feedbacks on social media

### **b. Parent Advisory Board**

Consider joining the Parent Advisory Board!

This is an opportunity for you to become actively involved in Sunset Academy's decision making. The board is led by parent volunteers and meets with the leadership of Sunset Academy once a month for about one hour to discuss strategic and operational issues of the school.

If you are interested in join the board, please contact the director.

### **c. Social Media Interactions**

Sunset aims to build a positive public image in the community. As an independently run school, the positive reputation we have built over past decades is very valuable to us. We desire to maintain and enhance our positive image in our community through our hard work and genuine care that are guided by for our community. You can help us by providing genuine, constructive and helpful feedbacks on social media.

We have established presences in multiple social media such as Google Business, Facebook, and Twitter. We use these channels to provide helpful information about our school or about early childhood education in general. Our primary audience are currently enrolled families, but at times are public in general.

Parents is encouraged to follow us in at least one of the social media. During inclement weather or emergency, this is quickest way for us to make announcements.

Parents are welcome to interact with us on social media. All we ask is for all of us to be genuine, respectful, constructive and helpful to each other.

It will be tremendously helpful if you leave positive reviews on social media or business review sites such as Google, Facebook, Care.com etc.

#### **d. Support Home Language**

Sunset Academy will make every attempt to communicate in the parent's primary language. Currently we have translation in the following languages available: Spanish and Chinese. The following procedures are in place:

- Phone calls: If a parent calls Sunset Academy, and it is apparent that the parent/guardian's primary language is other than English, the staff member receiving the call will request the person's name, and phone number. By the end of that program day, one of our bilingual staff members will return the phone call and respond to the parent's needs and questions. That staff member will share pertinent information and questions with the program director, and will initiate further communication, as needed.
- Tours: If a non-English speaking family schedules a tour at Sunset Academy, we ask the family to bring a translator if possible. If not available, Sunset Academy will attempt to provide a bilingual staff member to participate in the tour to translate for the family.
- Registration & ongoing communication: Sunset Academy's enrollment forms ask for the child and parent's primary languages, and ask the parent whether the family needs a translator. If the parent responds "yes", one of our bilingual staff members will be available to translate all of the following upon request: monthly newsletter (read to the parent, and answer questions for the parent); registration & enrollment paperwork (complete paperwork with the parent); parent-teacher conferences (translator present); Parent Handbook; and Back to School Night.
- Classroom transitions: If a child enrolls at Sunset Academy, and the parent's primary language is other than English, Sunset Academy will attempt to provide a bilingual staff member for parent-teacher conferences.
- Parent Handbook—Sunset Academy is in search of a volunteer to translate the Sunset Academy Parent Handbook into Spanish. If you can assist with this project, please let us know.

#### **e. Sensitive to Diversity**

- Sunset provides services to a very diversified community and abides by its Non-Discriminatory policy as spelled out in Part 3 of this handbook.
- Sunset provides materials and resources (information about community-based programs, community mental health, child nutrition, physical fitness, food banks, Child Find, medical/dental resources) to all families, including families with high needs. You can find such material at the check-in/out area.
- Sunset Academy offers opportunities for all families, including those from different backgrounds and communities, to get to know one another and work together for the benefit of the children in the

program. Traditionally we hold two parties twice a year, once on or around July 4<sup>th</sup>, and once on or around December 25<sup>th</sup>. Parents are invited to volunteer to make these parties successful.

## 22. Video & Photography Policies

The school has surveillance cameras which are used for security and training purposes. Please note that while on site you may be videotaped. All taping is strictly used for the benefit of the school and its security and training purposes.

Photos may be taken for use in the child's portfolio and will be taken only with the school's camera/card. Photos of children will not be removed from the school for any other use unless your written permission has been given first. All photo/video is used internally including the graduation and holiday shows.

Families give permission for their children to be videotaped and/or photographed. If you are taking video or pictures (for example, for your child's birthday party celebration) please check with your child's teacher regarding which children can be included.

The school may allow you to access the video of the classroom of your children via WatchMeGrow App. **Never record video or take screenshots.** It violates the privacy of the children and teachers in the class. Recording and sharing, or even keeping it for your own use, is a serious violation of our terms of service and can result in suspension or termination of your account.

## 23. Breastfeeding Friendly Policies

In recognition of the well-documented health advantages of breastfeeding for children and mothers, Sunset Academy maintains a breastfeeding friendly environment. Sunset Academy subscribes to the following support policy for breastfeeding mothers:

- A private room is available for mothers to breastfeed or express milk. The room is private, sanitary, shielded from view, free from intrusion, is located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out pump parts, and has an electrical outlet. If preferred, they may also breastfeed or express milk in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the staff. Expressed milk can be stored in Sunset Academy's infant room refrigerator.
- Informational materials are available for all mothers and caregivers.
- We train staff annually.
- We inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding.
- We provide learning and play opportunities which normalize breastfeeding for children.
- We ensure that all breastfeeding families we serve can store and label milk properly for child are use.
- We provide a breastfeeding friendly environment.
- We support breastfeeding employees.
- We ensure that each infant has an individual feeding plan that supports best feeding practices.
- We contact and coordinate with local skilled breastfeeding support and actively refer to community resources.
- We continue to learn about protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.
- We employ a Lactation Management Specialist and a Certified Lactation Counselor. These staff members are available for consultation with parents.



## 24. Licensing & Complaints

### a. Licensing Inspections

Sunset Academy is licensed by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Our License number is 1698354. The most recent Fire, Health, and Childcare Licensing inspections are available for review upon request. Inspections are maintained by the Director of Sunset Academy office.

### b. Reporting Licensing Complaints

If you have a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations at Sunset Academy, you may file a complaint at:

Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC)  
Division of Early Learning Licensing and Administration (DELLA)  
1575 Sherman Street, 1st Floor  
Denver, CO 80203  
[cdec eclchildcarelicensing@state.co.us](mailto:cdec_eclchildcarelicensing@state.co.us)  
Phone: 1-800-799-5876 or 303-866-5948  
Fax: 303-866-4453