

MVCA  
**SCHOOL AGE**  
**CHILD CARE**  
PROGRAMS  
**2009**



## **MUSCONETCONG VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

School-Age Child Care Programs

### **PARENT HANDBOOK 2009-2010**

#### **HISTORY OF THE MVCA**

The Musconetcong Valley Community Association was founded in 1995 for the purpose of providing quality and affordable recreational and child care programs to the citizens of the Musconetcong Valley and surrounding areas. It is incorporated and was awarded 501(c)3 tax-exempt status by the IRS. Boards of Trustees oversee the MVCA and its Foundation (MVCF).

The MVCA offers school-age child care programs in Washington Township (Morris County). Camps in Long Valley and Flanders offer children an enriching summer experience. In addition, the MVCA sponsors fitness, educational, recreational, and cultural programs. The MVCA does not require a membership fee for its programs.

The MVCA office is located in the Valley Professional Center in Long Valley. The administrative staff includes the Director, Administrative Assistant, and Bookkeeper.

#### **LICENSING**

MVCA child care programs are licensed by the State of New Jersey through the Department of Children and Families. The state licenses are renewed every three years based on results from inspections in the areas of safety, administration and program content.

#### **PROGRAM STAFF**

Adult counselors/ head teachers and assistants age 16+ comprise the staff at each child care site, with site supervisors overseeing these programs.

Criminal and child abuse background checks are done on all employees and volunteers working directly with children.

Employees are expected to complete CPR and first aid courses, and to routinely update their certifications. Periodic staff meetings are held for the purpose of addressing current issues, orienting new staff, and planning. Staff members are given the opportunity to participate in off-site workshops and classes in child care and related topics.

#### **PHYSICAL SETTINGS**

The MVCA after school program take place at Old Farmers Road School in Washington Township with transportation provided from Long Middle School. Morning and afternoon Kindergarten Kids programs are held at the MVCA building located at the Valley Professional Center. The MVCA will provide full day care at the Long Valley facility during certain school holidays if there is sufficient enrollment (10 minimum).

#### **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

An afternoon at our school-age child care program includes adequate time for completing homework. Whenever possible, a choice of quiet or semi-quiet homework environment is given. A snack is provided. Whenever possible, the children have the opportunity to use the gym or outdoor playground, fields, etc., depending on weather conditions. Group activities are

incorporated into the program, and there are opportunities for arts and crafts, games, performing arts and special programs.

An occasional field trip may be planned. Permission slips are distributed well in advance of any such trip. The students are transported in an MVCA owned vehicle driven by a CDL driver.

### **PROGRAM CALENDAR**

MVCA programs follow the same calendar as the respective schools in which they are held. In addition, full day programs are offered, provided there is adequate enrollment (at least ten) for school holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Teachers' Convention, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, and Spring Vacation. Notices will be distributed prior to these holidays. The minimum enrollment count is determined one week prior to the date of the proposed full day program. There will not be programs on Good Friday, or during Thanksgiving or Christmas vacations. On **scheduled** early dismissals, after school care will run from school dismissal to 6:00PM. For **scheduled** delayed openings, the morning K-Kids program will begin at the regular time.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

#### **Before care**

In case of inclement weather causing an early morning school delay, the Early Bird before care program at Old Farmers Road school **will not be held**. This is due to school scheduling difficulties.

#### **Kindergarten Kids**

If school is delayed due to inclement weather, the morning Kindergarten Kids program at the MVCA building will be delayed by the same amount of time, i.e. 2 hours (we would start at 9:00). As with any delayed opening, the children will go to kindergarten at about noon, and the afternoon session of Kindergarten Kids will be from noon to 3:00pm.

If an emergency closing is called during the day before afternoon kindergarten has begun, you have the choice of picking up your children at their school, or they will be bussed to the MVCA building where you can pick them up as soon as possible. This situation would cause afternoon Kindergarten at the schools to be cancelled, so the children in the morning MVCA program will need to be picked up at the MVCA building as soon as possible. The MVCA staff will call parents to tell them of the early closing.

It is imperative that you have a viable emergency plan on file with your school and have a local emergency pickup person to come for your child if you are unable to arrive in a timely manner.

#### **After school care emergency closings**

If the weather becomes inclement during the day but school is not dismissed early, the MVCA will hold the after school care programs as usual. However, we ask parents to come and pick up their children as soon as the weather turns bad and to allow extra driving time for a safe pick-up. While it is our goal to insure the safety of our children, families, and staff, we will have to enforce our late fees to encourage you to arrive on time. Counselors may call parents at work to advise them of weather conditions.

There will be no after school care programs on days when school is closed or dismissed early **due to inclement weather**. If school is dismissed early, your child will be sent home on the bus

unless you have made other arrangements with the school. It is imperative that the school has your work phone number and emergency plan on file.

**PICK-UP**

Whoever picks up a student must sign him/her out in the attendance log. No one other than those with written authorization may pick up a student, unless a parent calls the MVCA office or program prior to pick-up with the pertinent information. Counselors will ask for identification from any unfamiliar person (parents as well as others)

requesting to pick up a student. This ID will be checked against the student file information. There may be situations in which non-custodial parents are NOT authorized to pick up a child, thus the counselors will familiarize themselves with each student’s family situation. Students will not be released to anyone under 18.

***In the event that a student is not picked up by 6:00PM, a late fee must be paid directly to the counselor at the time of pick-up. The fees are:***

<u>Fee (per child)</u>	<u>Pick-up between</u>
<b>\$10</b>	<b>6:01 to 6:15</b>
<b>\$15</b>	<b>6:16 to 6:30</b>
<b>\$20</b>	<b>6:31 to 6:45</b>
<b>\$25</b>	<b>6:46 to 7:00</b>

If a student is not picked up by 6:15PM, the counselor will attempt to call a parent. If a parent cannot be reached, someone from the list of emergency phone numbers will be called. The counselor will try to leave a message at the child’s home to notify the parents of the arrangement that has been made. If no one can be reached by 7:00PM, the MVCA is **required** to notify DCF and/or the local police.

In the event that someone arriving to pick up a student appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or in some other way impaired, a staff member may not release the student to him/her. Someone from the emergency list will be called. See *Impaired Individual Policy*.

Communication with the MVCA by phone is encouraged. Information cards with contact numbers will be distributed at the beginning of the program year. Please note, however, that calling head does not automatically absolve the parent from paying a late fee.

**ARRIVAL**

Parents dropping off a student for a morning program must escort the student to the program room no earlier than 7:00AM. Children may not be left unattended. Some programs have parent information bulletin boards that we encourage you to see upon arrival.

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND SCHEDULES**

If a student participates in any after school activity in addition to MVCA, a parent’s written note to that effect must be on file at the site. All attempts will be made to get students to and from these

activities. If a student leaves the MVCA program for an activity that lasts until 6:00PM, the MVCA relinquishes responsibility at the time the student leaves MVCA.

Please notify the MVCA office – 908-876-3141 - or appropriate program phone if your child is in school but will not be attending the program on a scheduled day.

### **NEWSLETTERS**

Newsletters, notices, and/or program calendars will be distributed periodically. Included will be notification of upcoming events, plans, and general information. A reminder of program changes due to school half days and vacations will appear.

### **BEHAVIOR/ EXPULSION POLICY**

The structured, nurturing environment of the MVCA programs is one in which students will have fun, be safe, and enjoy experiences that will foster self-esteem through the combined development of physical, creative, and social skills. Good social skills are emphasized. See the *MVCA Positive Discipline Policy*.

All attempts are made to apply positive, behavior-modifying discipline. It is the goal of the MVCA that reinforcing good behavior, rather than reacting to undesirable behavior, will affect the desired change. However, the MVCA staff will notify parents by way of a written document if a child's actions include habitual inappropriate language, or harassing another student or staff member. Other infractions that require written documentation include, but are not limited to, jeopardizing one's own safety or that of another, and willful destruction or theft of property.

In the rare case that a student receives three related write-ups, a decision will be made by the MVCA staff, director, and Board of Trustees as to whether the child should be allowed to remain in the program. The parent will be notified before and after the decision is made.

### **REGISTRATION**

Before a child may attend an MVCA child care program, parents must fill out an application, a health history, emergency form, and child custody form. Parents indicate on the registration form that they have read this manual. The student's information remains on file at the MVCA office as well as with the student's counselor. It is vital to keep the MVCA informed of changes of address, work or emergency phone numbers, etc.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Tuition is a yearly fee divided into ten equal "monthly" payments. The fees are calculated on 180 care days for those attending five days/week, 144 care days for four days/week; 108 for three days/week; 72 for two days/week; 36 for one day/week.

To begin a program, the MVCA requires the June tuition as a deposit and the current month's tuition. Payments must be received by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. You are asked to mail payments to the MVCA office rather than to hand them to a counselor. You will be provided with invoices to be submitted with your payment. There is a \$20 late fee for payments made after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. You will be responsible for any bank charges incurred for checks returned for insufficient funds. You have the option to charge tuition on a credit card, or have tuition charged automatically on the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each month.

The MVCA will expect prompt payment unless you notify the office of any unusual circumstances. Tuition accounts that are a month or more in arrears may result in dismissal from the program. Tuition payments more than 60 days in arrears are subject to 1.5% interest plus any costs associated with the recovery of same.

The MVCA works with County agencies subsidizing tuitions. It is the responsibility of the parents to initiate the required paperwork with the agency.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

To withdraw a child from the program, a parent must notify the MVCA in writing two weeks prior to the anticipated last day in the program. A refund of unused tuition will be issued after the child leaves the program. If written notice is not submitted, your child is considered to be in the program, and tuition payment is expected.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarships based on a sliding scale may be available to those who qualify. You may contact the MVCA office to request an application.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication between parents and the MVCA is the key to the safety of your child and the positive experience he/she will get from the program. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the MVCA office and staff, as well as the school, informed of any changes in your child's daily schedule. Upon enrolling your child in an MVCA program, you must inform the school in writing. Please call the MVCA office or program phone if you have questions or concerns about the program.

### **STUDENT HEALTH AND MEDICATION**

It is suggested that any student requiring medication receive his/her dosage from the school nurse before dismissal or after arriving at school; MVCA staff members should not be responsible for giving medication during program hours.

In accordance with the NJ state licensing requirements for child care programs, the following information outlines the MVCA policy on communicable diseases:

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend the program. If such symptoms occur while in the program, the parent will be called to take the child home:

Severe pain or discomfort	Acute diarrhea
Episodes of acute vomiting	Oral temperature of 101.5 degrees F
Sore throat or severe coughing	Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
Red eyes with discharge	Infected untreated skin patches
Difficult or rapid breathing	Swollen joints
Visibly enlarged lymph nodes	Stiff neck
Blood in urine	Skin rash lasting more than 24 hours

The child may return to the program once he/she is symptom-free or has a physician's note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to him/herself or others.

If a child contracts any of the following diseases, please report it to us immediately. The child may not return to the program without a doctor's note.

### **TABLE OF EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

#### Respiratory Illnesses

Chicken Pox  
German Measles\*  
Hemophilus Influenza\*  
Measles\*  
Meningococcus\*  
Mumps\*  
Strep Throat\*  
Tuberculosis\*  
Whooping Cough

#### Gastro-intestinal Illnesses

Giardia Lamblia\*  
Hepatitis A\*  
Salmonella\*  
Shigella\*  
E-coli\*  
Campylobacter\*

#### Contact Illnesses

Impetigo  
Lice  
Scabies  
Shingles

\*Reportable diseases, as specified in N.J.A.C. 10:122-7.10(a)

### **MVCA SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY**

To guarantee a positive social and educational climate, it is important that students of all ages understand that acceptable standards of behavior will be expected at all times. The methods of discipline used shall be positive and consistent with the developmental needs of the child and will be applied with full knowledge and understanding of the parents.

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of a child, the group, and the adult.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

*We will use the following methods of positive discipline:*

- Praising – describing the specific behavior we like
- Persuading – pointing out the positive aspects of the desired behavior
- Modeling – setting an example for the child to model
- Challenging – appealing to a child's competitive desire to do well
- Resolving Disagreements – listening to both sides of the story without intent to blame or hurt
- Ignoring – ignoring undesirable behavior (if not harmful) and focusing on positive
- Distancing – removing ourselves or the child from the immediate scene (time out)
- Establishing Routines – children thrive best on order and regularity; they are happier when they know what to expect.
- Setting Limits – (rules and regulations) – having an appropriate balance between control and affection to help the children grow up well-adjusted
- Keeping control – keeping our emotions under control when disciplining

## **INFORMATION TO PARENTS STATEMENT**

Our program is required by the State Child Care Licensing Law to be licensed by the Bureau of Licensing of the New Jersey Division of Children and Families. A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location.

To be licensed, our program must comply with the MANUAL OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS (THE OFFICIAL LICENSING REGULATIONS). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record-keeping requirements; and others.

Our program must have on the premises a copy of the MANUAL OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS and make it available to interested parents for your review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask the office. Parents may secure a copy of the MANUAL OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS for a nominal fee by writing to the Bureau of Licensing, DCF, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about our policies and program or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the MANUAL OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our program may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report them to the Bureau of Licensing. Of course, we appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention also.

Our program is required to have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by the parent(s) to be responsible for the child. Please refer to our policy.

Our program must have a policy about dispensing medicine and the management of communicable diseases. Please refer to the Parent Manual for our policy.

Parents are entitled to review the program's copy of the Bureau of Licensing's inspection/violation report on the program, which are issued after every state licensing inspection of our program. If there is a complaint investigation, you are entitled to review the Bureau's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the program during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our program must cooperate with all DCS inspections/ investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our program must have available a diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Bureau for the children's use.

Our program must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to participate in and observe the activities of the program. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the program should discuss their interest with the Program Director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our program at any time without having to secure prior approval. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our program must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the school, and must obtain prior written permission from parents before taking a child on such a trip.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by an adult, whether working at the program or not, is required by state law to report the concern immediately to the DCF Office of Child Abuse control, 800-792-8610, or to any district office. Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: Community Education office, CN 717, Trenton, NJ 08625.

### **IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL POLICY**

New Jersey DYFS has specific policies regarding the pick-up of children by an impaired individual. If the person attempting to pick up the child, in the opinion of the director or staff member, appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that the child would be placed at risk if released to that person, we will not release that child.

We will contact another person on the child's pick-up list. If there is no way of contacting another person to pick up the child, we will contact DCF to seek assistance.

If you have any questions about this policy, feel free to contact us at 908-876-3141.