

## **Open Hearth at Waitsfield Elementary School** **After-School Kids (ASK): *Parent Handbook***

**Philosophy:** Our goal is to create a safe, stimulating and responsive environment for all Waitsfield students in grades K-6. We strive to achieve this goal by attracting and supporting quality trained staff and by engaging parents and the larger community in our programming and goals. We value children participating in the curriculum development and planning processes based on a responsive classroom model to help them become invested, self-motivated learners. Our program includes structured time for students to complete homework assignments in a supportive setting with trained staff. We strive to create a respectful environment that celebrates each other's differences, similarities and individual contributions. We work to create an engaged relationship between the community and school that supports civic projects and volunteerism.

**Our program:** ASK is a non-profit State licensed after-school program that is operated as part of the Open Hearth Community Center. Activities include outdoor play, recreational games, supported homework sessions, and quiet and active activities. Children are supervised at all times. A typical daily schedule includes:

### Grades K-2

2:25 - 2:40 Outside

2:40 snack then meeting

3:00 activity

3:30 choice of Activity, Workshop, Class, or programming by staff (one hour)

or 3:30 physical activity for half hour then homework/quiet time for half hour

4:30 – 5:30 activity

### Grades 3-6

2:25 Meeting

2:40 Outside

3:15 inside for snack

3:30 choice of Activity, Workshop, Class, or programming by staff (one hour)

or 3:30 homework/quiet time for half hour then activity for half hour

4:30 Physical activity

5:00 – 5:30 clean-up and quiet activities

### **Special Programs:**

**Activities** are run by ASK staff or by volunteers who may be parents or other members of the community. Activities are held as part of the ASK program. No advance registration for Activities is required. In order to participate in the activity, a child must attend the after-school program on that day. Examples may include chess, knitting and yoga.

**Workshops** are run by instructors from outside the ASK program and will typically be offered once a week for 4-8 weeks. A separate fee is required and enrolled children will receive first priority and a discount. All workshop fees need to be received before the start of the first workshop. Parents may enroll their kids part-time for the duration of the workshop (for a minimum of 4 weeks) if space is available. Children are not required to

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attend the ASK program on that day in order to attend the workshop. Examples may include African Drumming and specialized art classes.

**Classes** are run by outside organizations and are open to children from outside the ASK program and from other schools. A separate fee is required and registration is done through the outside organization. Children attending ASK on the day of a Class would be signed out of the ASK program (and possibly back in, at the end of the class) through a permission slip. Enrolled ASK kids would be eligible to receive a discount for the Class, and do not get their ASK fee reduced for a day they attend a Class. ASK works with outside organizations to bring activities such as Ballet, Introduction to Theatre and Karate, as an opportunity for all Valley students.

**Staff:** The Director is responsible for developing and supervising the after-school program. A Teacher and an Assistant are also present at the school to support the Director in running the program and to meet child care guidelines and ratios.

**Registration:** Registration is limited to 36-39 children per day, depending on the ages of children present. First priority is given to enrolled children, and drop-ins are welcome as space allows.

**Withdrawals:** A two-week notification is required for all withdrawals.

**Calendar:** The program follows the school year calendar, Monday through Friday on full school days, from 2:25 until 5:30 pm. On Professional Development days, children may arrive at the program at 11:55 for an additional \$10.

**School Closures:** The program will be closed on all days the Waitsfield Elementary School is closed or closes early due to weather or an emergency. Your child will be expected to follow arrangements that you have made with the school.

**Payments:** All payments are due in advance. Payments should be placed in the payment box or in the afterschool mailbox located in the front entrance to the school.

**Fees and Scheduling:** A non-deductible registration fee of \$15 per family is required at the time of registration. There will be no refunds for absences. If your child is absent from the program for any reason on her scheduled day (play dates, non-school vacations, etc.) you are required to pay for the day. The only exception will be prolonged illness. Full-time enrollment is five days per week, and part time enrollment is a regular schedule for fewer than 5 days per week. The fee schedule is as follows:

Grade 1-6, Full time enrollment \$10/day	Kindergartners, full time \$12/day
Grade 1-6, Part time enrollment \$12/day	Kindergartners, part time \$14/day
Grade 1-6, Drop-in, if available \$15/day	Kindergartners, drop-in \$15/day
Early Release Days: Additional charge of \$10	

**A sibling discount** of 10% is given off the total regular program invoice.

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**Drop-ins:** 24-hour notice to the Director (496-3643 x118) is required. A completed registration form must be on file. Payment is due on the day of attendance. 10-session punch cards are available for \$150.

**Failure to make payment:** If your account should fall into arrears, you will be notified by the Director. Accounts in arrears will incur a finance charge of \$5 per week until paid in full. An account more than two weeks in arrears will require a warning of program dismissal by the Director. If the account is in arrears by three weeks, the child will be removed from the program. It is our sincere wish that none of the above steps will need to be taken. We appreciate you keeping your account up to date.

**Pick-Up:** The After-School Kids program ends promptly at 5:30. Children must be signed out before leaving. A late pick-up fee of \$1 per minute will be incurred when parents are late and is payable directly to the staff member who stays with your child.

**Tuition Assistance:** ASK accepts tuition subsidy from the state of Vermont. To apply for tuition assistance from the state contact Child Care Services Division, 103 S. Main St., Waterbury, Vt. 05676, (800) 649-2642. Families may also apply to the Mad River Valley Community Fund, PO Box 353, Waitsfield 05673, for financial assistance for a special family hardship. If you would like assistance, please let us know and we will be happy to help you through the process.

**Parental Involvement:** Parents are encouraged to visit the program at any time, whether to participate in the program or simply observe. Parent conferences are available at any time during the school year, at a parent's request. In order to keep fees as low as possible, we will plan several fund-raising events during the year. Parental involvement will be crucial to our success.

**Health:** Parents are encouraged to report any unusual conditions that the staff should be aware of (parents going away, rashes, emotionally upset, etc.). If a child becomes ill while at the afterschool program, a parent will be called and asked to pick up the child.

**Discipline policy and procedures:** Discipline should direct children towards positive behavior. It should never humiliate. We praise good behavior and help redirect disruptive behavior. Our goal is to guide children as they make positive choices about their behavior. Our focus is on preventative discipline, which involves rule setting (children usually participate in the establishment of rules), informing children of consequences, follow-through, consistency, humor and redirection. Children are encouraged to talk through their problems when a conflict arises, with the other child or children involved and with a teacher acting as mediator rather than problem solver. We provide acceptable outlets for anger, excessive energy and frustration.

The program incorporates the Waitsfield Ways:

- Set a good example for yourself and others by helping those in need
- Respect each other's body, property, feelings, and differences

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- Do our best
- Keep our school safe, neat and healthy

**Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Policy:** As professional teachers and child care providers we are mandated by the State of Vermont to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Staff is directed to report all suspicions immediately to the director prior to calling the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) to file the report.

**Child Care Consumer Concern Line** 1-800-540-7942

**Notice of Nondiscrimination:** ASK does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, or marital status.

**The ASK Committee:** The Open Hearth at Waitsfield Elementary School committee is a subcommittee of the Open Hearth Community Center. Committee members are committed to the goals of the program and bring a full range of skills and perspectives. The Committee bears final responsibility for the direction and control of the program, including setting and monitoring goals and policies, overseeing administration, maintaining quality and monitoring finances.

The Committee consists of five to nine voting members; the Director is a nonvoting member. Current parents of After-School Kids represent the majority of the Committee. New Committee members and officers are voted in during the June meeting.

Everyone is welcome to attend monthly Committee meetings. After-School Kids parents and community members are encouraged to participate in active committees (including Activities and Workshops, Fundraising, and Grant Writing). Participation on committees is flexible, enjoyable, and is appreciated by the entire After-School Kids community.

Current Committee members are: Amy Tewksbury (Chair and Representative to Open Hearth), Deb Loomis (Vice Chair), Connie Gaylord (Treasurer), AnnMarie Harmon (Secretary), Kaiya Korb, April Magnant, Jennifer Peterson, Eva Frankel and Rachel Rosenblum.

**Contact Information:** Please feel free to contact us at (802) 496-3643 ext. 118. The fax number is 496-3226. Our mailing address is:

Open Hearth at Waitsfield Elementary School (ASK)  
3951 Main Street  
Waitsfield, VT 05673

**Welcome to After-School Kids!**