

PARENT HANDBOOK

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Mahoosuc Kids Association operates with a philosophy of service to children, parents, and community. For children, the program offers a safe, supportive environment that encourages creativity and positive self-esteem through wholesome and fun activities, including age-appropriate educational activities, creative play, and nutritious snacks. For parents, the program offers an affordable program with dependable scheduling and flexible enrollment policies. For the community, the program provides support for local business, social services, schools and families. The program receives direction from a diverse local advisory board.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Mahoosuc Kids Association serves children in Kindergarten through 12th grades that are enrolled in the elementary, middle, and high schools of Maine School Administrative District #44. The program provides planned and supervised activities designed to meet the individual educational, social, and recreational needs of each child. This unique program has been developed to enhance the child's existing skills while introducing and encouraging new interest areas. The program will provide an environment for children to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them.

A variety of methods will be utilized, including learning programs, planned large group games, small "Club" or special interest groups, and community resources. Many activities will be available to each child daily. Activities will be offered on a rotating basis and will give children a chance to choose, based on their own skills and interests. Programs will involve active and quiet activities, which will give children an opportunity to socialize and work on cooperation and group problem solving skills. Other activities will allow children to learn and practice skills in creating projects to take home. Still other programs will focus on fun activities that reinforce children's academic skills. Time will also be provided each day for assistance with homework and for unscheduled leisure time.

Mahoosuc Kids Association Summer Adventure serves children who are entering grades Kindergarten through fifth grade who are resident, or who are visiting, the greater Bethel area. The Summer Adventure will offer a fun and exciting variety of activities and outings. Weekly and special activities include weekly themes, arts & crafts, environmental education, enrichment programs, swimming, field trips and hiking.

The safety and well being of all children in the program is of greatest importance. For any field trip or activity that is not within normal programming, permission forms will be provided and must be signed by parents. Guidelines for behavior will be developed with the children and enforced in positive ways, which encourage children in their development of self-discipline. Positive reinforcement methods will also be used in order to help children develop positive patterns of behavior with the other children and adults in the program. From time-to-time parents may be called upon to participate in a disciplinary partnership to resolve special situations.

For health and safety reasons, in order to be accepted into and continue in the program, all children must be fully toilet trained, be able to attend to their own personal hygiene, and have the ability to participate fully in a program that is informal and unstructured. If the **Mahoosuc Kids Association** staff determines that a child does not appear to have the physical or developmental abilities to participate in the program, the staff will bring such concerns to the

attention of the parents for further discussion regarding whether the child can remain in the program.

If it is determined by the program staff that a child is unable to benefit from the program or that the participation of any child for any reason would pose a threat to the health and safety of that child or other children, the parents will be asked to withdraw that child from the program.

CODE OF CONDUCT

*Pursuant to the contract between MSAD #44 and **Mahoosuc Kids Association** by which **Mahoosuc Kids Association** has permission to use MSAD #44 facilities, all participants must follow the MSAD #44 Code of Conduct, a copy of which is attached here.*

MSAD #44 Code of Conduct:

The objective of this code is to establish such rules of student conduct, which have been deemed by the MSAD #44 Board of Directors to be necessary for the successful accomplishment of the mission of the schools. Rules of student conduct and administrative procedures for use in the schools shall be based upon but not limited to the following:

- A. No student shall intentionally, recklessly, negligently, or otherwise threaten, assault, or cause physical injury to other students or any school personnel. Actions taken in self- defense shall not be considered an intentional act under this rule.
- B. No student shall steal or intentionally damage any district or private property either on school premises, on any school bus, or during any school sponsored activity.
- C. A student shall not knowingly buy, sell, possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or copy cat drugs, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- D. No student is allowed to use or have in their possession tobacco or tobacco products in the buildings or on the grounds of any district school or on any district property.
- E. A student shall not by use of violence, force, noise, coercion, intimidation, or any other conduct cause disruption of any school function; nor shall any student urge others to engage in any such disruptive conduct.
- F. A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit a knife, gun, or any other object that reasonably can be considered a weapon.
- G. As students pursue their freedoms of speech, press, and assembly, they shall refrain from libel, slander, obscenity, personal attacks, or incitement to illegal action.
- H. Discrimination against and harassment of students and school employees because of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability are prohibited.
- I. No student, including leaders of student organizations, shall plan, encourage or engage in injurious hazing activities.

Further information is available in the MSAD #44 Policy Manual that is available in the School offices and the Central School Office.

PROGRAM STAFFING

Mahoosuc Kids Association is a state-licensed facility with one teacher to 8 children maximum ratio for school age four year olds through age 12. A Program Director oversees program direction and supervision of all sites. Qualified personnel, assisted by community volunteers, staff each site. Any person who reasonably believes that Licensing rules have been violated my report this information to Community Services Center, Child Care Licensing Unit, State House Station 11, Augusta, ME 04311. MKA personnel are mandated reporters to the Department of Human Services when there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child under the age of eighteen.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Complete and return enrollment forms to the Program Coordinator with check or money order payable to **Mahoosuc Kids Association**. The first week's non-refundable fee and \$25 per family enrollment fee is due with the registration packet.
2. Read this Parent Handbook carefully. You are responsible for the information contained in it. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Coordinator.
3. Enrollment is available on a first-come, first-served basis. A waiting list will be maintained for available openings.
4. **Mahoosuc Kids Association** follows the MSAD #44 school schedule, and it offers additional services on school holidays and vacations if sufficient enrollment is requested. The **Mahoosuc Kids Association Summer Adventure** program runs for approximately eight weeks during the MSAD #44 summer vacation period.
5. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep enrollment records current as to home and business phone, contract hours, and persons authorized to pick up children. Changes should be made with the teacher/coordinator.

***Mahoosuc Kids Association** does not discriminate against employees or participants on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability in accordance with all federal and state laws related to nondiscrimination.*

SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

1. Parents or authorized persons at least 18 years of age must sign every child in and out of the program each day on the designated sign-in/out sheet. For children who only attend the afternoon program, a note signed by a parent stating that the child will go to **Mahoosuc Kids Association** upon dismissal must be sent to school each day or one stating their schedule for the week.

2. Children will not be released to persons not listed on the enrollment form without written authorization signed and dated by the parent.
3. Parents are encouraged to make themselves aware of information about the program and its operation by regularly checking the “Parent Information” area and watching for special event notices and information sheets sent home with their children.
4. Children will be released to walk on their own to extra curricular activities on the school grounds with written Parent Permission Only. The program will not be responsible for the child once he or she is released under these conditions.
5. No child will be permitted to walk home from the program at any time. All children must be signed out by an authorized adult.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

1. Hours of service provided over those specified by the contract will be charged the current slot fee for afternoon sessions. These fees will be added to the following week’s payment.
2. Absences due to illness or vacation time will not be refunded. Absences due to extended illness or injury may be eligible for refund with a doctor’s recommendation.
3. If a child is picked up after 6:00 PM, parents will be charged \$5.00 per child for every 15 minutes after 6:00, or part thereof, which must be paid in cash to the teacher in charge. If late pick-ups become a continual problem, a child may be dismissed from the program.
4. A sliding fee scale is available by parent request only and will be based upon school lunch program status. Contact the Program Director for details.

ILLNESS, MEDICATION AND EMERGENCIES

1. Children who are ill (intestinal illnesses, running nose, continuous cough, red throat, unexplained rashes, swollen glands, head or stomach ache), or who have had a fever within the past 24 hours, **should not be brought to the program.**
 1. When a child becomes ill at the site, the parent will be notified to pick him/her up immediately.
 2. In the event that a child should have a sudden illness or accident while attending a **Mahoosuc Kids Association Program**, the staff will attempt to reach the parent for instructions.
 3. If the parent cannot be reached immediately, or if the staff member in charge views the situation as critical, **Mahoosuc Kids Association** staff will request assistance from rescue personnel. Parents will be responsible for all costs incurred in such emergencies.

4. A consent form for the administration of medication must be completed by the parent and be on file at **Mahoosuc Kids Association**
5. Only physician prescribed medication, in the original prescription container, will be administered at the program. The container must be labeled by the pharmacist and include the name of the child, date, dosage, name of the medication, and method of administration.
6. Medication will be secured in a locked cabinet. Students requiring medication will receive their medication in the **Mahoosuc Kids Association** office or the school office.
7. Decisions for children to be permitted to carry and administer their own medication must be made on a case by case basis. **Mahoosuc Kids Association** must be contacted in advance, and permission granted before children will be permitted to carry medication.
8. In the event that the school has to be evacuated the following are the emergency/evacuation sites for the district schools:

Andover Elementary School – Andover Library
 Crescent Park Elementary School – Bethel Inn Conference Center
 Woodstock Elementary School – Locke Mills Legion Hall
 Telstar Middle and High School – Alliance Church/ Gould Academy

SNACKS AND NUTRITION

1. A nutritious snack will be served to all children during the course of the afternoon each day.
2. Since we encourage good nutrition, parents are asked to use discretion if sending foods with their children.
3. No gum or candy will be allowed in the program.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Mahoosuc Kids Association encourages and supports parent involvement in the program. Volunteers are needed in many program capacities, including as advisory board members, working with children, fundraising and volunteer recruitment. A Parent Education program is planned as a vital component of this program. Parents are invited to visit the program at any time.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Since our program provides a wide variety of toys and games, **we discourage children from bringing these items from home.** If items from home are brought to the program, staff cannot be responsible for their safe return. A list of necessary personal items will be given to children upon enrollment in the Summer Adventure.
2. Because there are so many children involved in this program, it is very important that all clothing, jackets, lunch containers and backpacks are **clearly labeled** with your child's name.

PROGRAM HOURS

Mahoosuc Kids Association will operate when school is in session and on an as needed basis for February and April vacations, but will definitely be closed on the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Memorial Day. Indicated need and enrollment forms will determine days of operation. Summer Adventure will be closed on July 4th. MKA will be closed for scheduled school vacations and if SAD #44 cancels school due to weather conditions.

SNOW DAY POLICY:

If SAD #44 has no school— MKA is closed

If SAD #44 dismisses early, MKA will be closed. The school will send all children home to their designated drop offs.

If SAD #44 cancels all after-school activities, MKA will remain open for working families for as long as childcare is needed. All calendar activities and enrichment programs will be canceled. To ensure traveling safety for all families and staff, please have an alternative plan for pick up or school bus drop off location and make certain that the school office and MKA staff are aware of the plan.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Mahoosuc Kids Association does not discriminate against employees or participants on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability in accordance with all federal and state laws related to nondiscrimination.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

To ensure equal opportunity for children with disabilities, **Mahoosuc Kids Association** will provide reasonable accommodations and/or make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices and procedures, to the extent required by law and where such accommodations or modifications would not pose an undue administrative or financial hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the services provided by the program.

If parents are seeking specific accommodations or modifications on behalf of a child with a disability, or if they have concerns or questions about whether their child will be able to benefit from the program, they should bring such matters to the attention of the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. The Program Coordinator may ask parents to provide necessary medical and other documentation regarding the nature of the child's disability and the accommodation or modification sought. Because of the additional time that may be required to request and receive information from specialist agencies and medical providers, parents should bring any request for accommodation to the attention of the Director well in advance of the start of the program to ensure that a decision can be made prior to the start of the program.

It is important to note that all enrollment documents must be completed before any such consideration process can begin.