River Side Rascals

Parent Handbook

Policies, Procedures & Expectations

"Where Every Child Matters, Every Day"

This handbook explains River Side Rascals' policies, procedures, tuition expectations, health and safety requirements, and family responsibilities. Parents and guardians are encouraged to review each section carefully and contact the Executive Director with any questions before signing the acknowledgment at the end of the handbook.

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Parent Page Access Code: **2000**

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Mission Statement

River Side Rascals provides safe, dependable, community-focused childcare that supports each child's development and partners with families every day.

Overview

River Side Rascals is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality, affordable childcare to families in South Dakota. As a nonprofit, all revenue is reinvested into the center to support operating costs, staff development, facility improvements, and program enhancements rather than distributed to owners or shareholders.

This structure allows River Side Rascals to focus on delivering exceptional care and educational experiences while maintaining financial transparency and accountability to the community it serves.

We rely on a combination of tuition, grants, and donations to sustain our programs and ensure accessibility for families. This nonprofit status also means we adhere to strict governance and compliance standards, overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors committed to the center's long-term success and community impact.

Enrollment Procedure

Schedule a Tour

Book a visit:

Tour our facility to see our classrooms, meet our teachers, and experience our daily routine.

Ask questions:

Learn about our philosophy, safety rules, handbook policies, and curriculum.

Submit an Application & Secure Your Spot

Fill out the forms:

- Review handbook: Read our parent handbook covering tuition policy, illness guidelines, closure schedule, daily procedures, and center policies. Sign the acknowledgment.
- Enrollment Application
    - Parent/guardian contact information
    - Emergency contacts (2 required)
    - Authorized pickup people
    - Health and allergy information

  - Dietary restrictions
  - Emergency medical authorization (required for child's acceptance)
  - Photo release consent
- Medication authorizations when applicable
- Signed parent-provider agreement

Provide Documents:

- Immunization record
- Custody or court documents when applicable

Registration fee:

Submit the standard $50 registration fee with your application. We will completely waive the $50 fee if your child starts care immediately following your application submission.

Securing Enrollment Spot

The 2-week holding rule:

We do not require a security deposit. However, your child must start within 2 weeks of your application date to guarantee their spot.

Holding a slot:

If you need to delay enrollment past the 2-week mark, you must pay the standard monthly tuition rate to hold and guarantee that open slot.

Waiting list policy:

If you do not start care or pay the tuition hold by the end of your 2-week window, you will lose the slot and be moved to the bottom of our waiting list.

To Start Care

Add Payment Method:

- Complete auto pay set up, by adding payers and method of payment to your Brightwheel profile.

Pay Invoice:

- Payment is due prior to receiving care.
- A billing plan will be added to the child's account based on parent-provider agreement selection.
- Your first invoice will be applied to your Brightwheel account and due before your child's start date.

An enrollment form and all required authorization documents must be completed and signed before a child may begin care at River Side Rascals. Drop-in care is not enrollment; it is temporary acceptance of an unenrolled child for that day. We are unable to offer part-time care currently.

Child Records and Enrollment File Requirements

Before a child may begin care, River Side Rascals must have a complete enrollment file on record. Required information includes:

- Enrollment form
- Parent/guardian contact information (Custody or court documents when applicable)
- Emergency contacts
- Authorized pickup people
- Immunization record
- Health and allergy information
- Dietary restrictions
- Emergency medical authorization
- Consent when applicable
- Signed parent-provider agreement

Parents and guardians are responsible for keeping all contact, medical, custody, and emergency information current. To protect our State Childcare license, children may not attend if required records are missing, expired, or incomplete.

Nondiscrimination Policy

River Side Rascals does not discriminate in enrollment, services, or treatment of children or families on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law. This policy applies to all enrollment decisions, program activities, and interactions with families and staff.

River Side Rascals participates in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program and maintains equal access as required by federal nondiscrimination provisions, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

Families who believe they have been subjected to discrimination may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights at 200 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20201, (800) 368-1019. Filing a complaint does not waive a family's right to pursue other legal remedies.

Trial Period

All new enrollments are subject to a trial period of 30 days. During this time, either party may terminate the agreement immediately without prior notice. Warnings of tuition policy non-compliance may not be sent during this period. If you do not understand the policies in this manual, please reach out to the Director.

Confidentiality of Child Records

All child records maintained by River Side Rascals — including enrollment forms, health and immunization records, emergency contact information, medication authorizations, incident reports, and attendance records — are confidential. Records will not be shared with any person outside of River Side Rascals staff without the written consent of the parent or legal guardian, except as required by South Dakota law (ARSD 67:42:17:15), a valid court order, or a lawful request from the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Child records are available to parents and legal guardians upon request. Staff who access child records do so only as necessary to perform their job duties. Records are stored securely and are not left accessible to unauthorized individuals. Upon disenrollment, child records will be retained in accordance with applicable state and licensing requirements.

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Holidays & Planned Closures

The daycare facility is closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Chamberlain Elementary School Field Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Chamberlain School District Homecoming Day
- Thanksgiving (and the following Friday)
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

*If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday prior, and if it falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday.

**There may be a maximum of three planned closures a year for staff training or a major school event. There will be, at a minimum, 2 weeks' notice sent out via Brightwheel before the scheduled closing.

Arrival and Departure

- Dropoff cutoff is 10:00 a.m.

- Children must be accompanied into the building, clocked in with the parent PIN, and acknowledged by staff.
- Parents and guardians must notify the Director immediately of custody changes, court orders, protection orders, or pickup restrictions. River Side Rascals will follow the most current written legal documentation on file.
- Staff may refuse to release a child to any person who is not authorized, cannot provide photo identification when requested, appears impaired, or presents a safety concern. If a safe release cannot be completed, the Director or designee may contact emergency contacts or local authorities as appropriate.

Authorized pickup persons must be listed on enrollment forms. Photo ID may be required.

*If a parent requests that someone other than the individuals listed on the application pick up a child, a written note or message on Brightwheel will be required before pick-up.

Adverse Weather Conditions

In the case of adverse weather conditions, the Executive Director will decide whether the center is open, closed, or will have a late start or early dismissal. The decision is based on several factors, including but not limited to weather, road conditions, and whether the necessary number of essential staff can get to the center to maintain the legally required staff-to-children ratios.

- If Chamberlain Public Schools are 2 hours late, the daycare will open 1 hour late at 8:30 a.m. If Chamberlain Public Schools is closed, the daycare will open 2 hours late, with a possible closure due to the severity of the weather. If it is not safe for our staff to get to the daycare, we will close.
- All notifications will be posted on Brightwheel and Facebook. The decision to open late will be made as soon as possible, depending on weather conditions. Should extreme weather conditions require the center to close early, parents will be called to pick up their children for the day.
- If there are any questions, please call ahead to find out if the daycare will be open.

Closure Guideline: If travel is not advised or the interstate is closed, the center will close. All other weather-related closure decisions are made by the Executive Director.

Daycare Phone: (605) 234-2000 or Brightwheel messaging

Termination/Withdrawal of Care

Parent Withdrawal: Families must provide at least two weeks' written notice before their child's final day. Tuition remains due for the full notice period, regardless of attendance. Families who do not provide the required notice will be billed for the two weeks following the child's final day of attendance.

Provider Termination with Notice

The daycare reserves the right to terminate enrollment for any reason with a two-week written notice to the family.

Immediate Termination

Care may be terminated immediately, without notice, for the following reasons:

- ∅ Failure to pay tuition or recurring delinquent payments.
- ∅ Failure to comply with policies outlined in this handbook or the enrollment contract.
- ∅ Destructive, violent, or uncontrollable behavior by a child that threatens the safety of others.
- ∅ Threatening, abusive, or disrespectful behavior by a parent toward staff or other children.
- ∅ Bringing a child to the center while knowingly ill, in violation of health policies.
- ∅ Failure to maintain required enrollment records needed for safe care.
- ∅ Inability of the facility to meet the child's specialized needs without additional staff.
- ∅ Breach of social media and online conduct policy.

About The Program

We are committed to providing children with many learning opportunities throughout the day, including story time, school time, music activities, outside activities, and more. Our daily routine is structured to best provide a consistent pattern that helps children feel safe, secure, and in control of their environment.

Time	Activity
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Free Play / Drop Off
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Circle Time
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Preschool
11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Rest Time
3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Snack
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Free Play / Center Play
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Teacher-Led Activity
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Pick-Up Time

Preschool Program

Our program follows the Learning Without Tears curriculum. We are open to the community for enrollment. Our enrolled children ages three and older by September 1 are automatically enrolled because preschool is included in tuition. Preschool hours are 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and include breakfast. We follow the Chamberlain school schedule for non-preschool days.

Lunches, Snacks, and Feeding

Lunch and snacks are included in tuition for all schedules. Our menus are designed to meet State requirements and are intended to give each child a well-balanced, nutritional meal. A wide variety of food choices are served to help your child begin a lifetime of healthy eating habits. We recognize that not all children will eat all types of food, but we feel exposure to a wide variety of foods at an early age is important. Menus are posted each month. If your child requires a special diet, food must be provided by the parent.

River Side Rascals participates in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program reimburses a portion of our food costs, which lessens the burden of grocery costs. CACFP requires that every parent in our Center complete an eligibility form annually, regardless of income. Failure to complete the form by the provided deadline will result in a late fee of $10.00 every week until the form is received. This will ensure our Center does not lose its grant and negatively affect our budget.

Allergies and Special Diets

Parents and guardians must notify the Director in writing of any food allergy, medical allergy, dietary restriction, or special feeding need before the child begins care or immediately after a new allergy or restriction is identified. An allergy action plan or medical documentation may be required for severe allergies, emergency medication, or substitutions outside the regular menu.

Staff will be informed of known allergies and emergency steps while protecting family confidentiality. Parents are responsible for providing approved substitute foods when required and for ensuring emergency medication is current and available. River Side Rascals will take reasonable steps to reduce exposure to known allergens; however, an allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed.

Infant Feeding

The daycare provides baby food and formula for infants until the infant's one-year birthday. The State requires us to offer whole milk when the infant turns one, unless the parent provides a doctor's note stating otherwise. Please let the director know the brand of formula you are using. Any specially needed formula will be the responsibility of the parents.

Infants are held while bottle-feeding, per state requirement. We do not prop bottles while a child is being fed. Infant formula, baby food, and baby cereal are provided at no extra cost. These items need to be pre-approved with the director before the child's start date to ensure availability.

Parent Provided Supplies

- → Diapers and Wipes – The parent will need to provide diapers and wipes. Staff will let you know when they are running low. If the child's supply is not replenished by the parent after notice and the child runs out, the staff will be unable to accept the child until diapers and wipes are provided.
- → Infant Formula – Parents of infants are asked to provide their child's formula if child uses a specialty formula.
- → Toys from Home – For some children, it is difficult to share personal toys brought from home. There is a great abundance of toys here for them to play with, so we ask that they do not bring any of their own unless prior approval is given (i.e., Show and Tell). Appropriate books and tales are always welcome. We are not responsible for lost or broken toys.
- → Treats – Special treats are permissible if prior arrangements have been made with the director and your child's teacher. No gum or hard candy is allowed in the center.

Cubbies

Each child is provided with a labeled cubby. All personal items should be kept in their cubbies.

Open Door Policy

We have an open-door policy. Visits from parents are encouraged at all hours throughout the day. Prior notice is not required.

Visitor Policy

The safety and security of children is River Side Rascals' highest priority. All visitors — including parents, volunteers, vendors, and other non-staff individuals — must check in with the Director upon arrival. Visitors must provide a photo ID upon request.

No individual other than authorized staff may have unsupervised access to children at any time. Visitors with extended or regular access to the facility (such as volunteers or contractors) are subject to background check requirements in accordance with ARSD 67:42:17:12 and center policy.

The Executive Director reserves the right to deny access to the facility to any individual who poses a real or potential safety concern. River Side Rascals' open-door policy for parents and legal guardians remains in effect as stated in the Open Door Policy section; however, all parents and guardians must still check in upon arrival.

Late Pick-Up Policy and Procedure

Procedure for Uncollected Children

If a child is not picked up by 5:30 PM, or within 1 hour of an illness notification, and neither parent can be reached, staff will immediately initiate the following sequence:

1. **Emergency Contact Outreach:** Staff will call the two designated emergency contacts listed on the child's enrollment form. Staff will leave detailed voicemails and send text messages if text-capable numbers are provided.
2. **Continued Supervision:** Two staff members will remain on-site with the child to ensure their safety and comfort. The child will never be left unattended or left with a single staff member.
3. **Escalation Window:** If 60 minutes pass from the end of the required pick-up window (6:30 PM for closing, or 2 hours from the initial illness notification) and neither the parents nor the emergency contacts can be reached or are able to pick up the child, the child will be considered abandoned.
4. **Authority Notification:** Staff are legally obligated to contact Local Social Services (Child Protection Hotline) and/or the Local Police Department to take custody of the child. Staff will provide authorities with the child's enrollment file and contact history.
5. **Parent Notification:** A note will be left on the front door of the facility indicating which agency has taken custody of the child and the contact number to reach.

Parental Responsibilities:

Parents must maintain at least two local, active emergency contacts who are authorized to pick up the child and are able to respond within the required window. All accumulated late pick-up fees will be added to the family's next standard tuition invoice and must be paid according to standard billing terms. Chronic lateness (more than three offenses per term) may result in the immediate termination of childcare service

Social Media and Online Conduct Policies

Privacy & Confidentiality

Staff and parents are prohibited from posting photos or videos of any child (other than their own) or staff member on personal social media accounts without express written consent from the Director and the parties involved.

Defamation & Reputation

The daycare reserves the right to terminate enrollment or employment if a parent or staff member makes public posts that are defamatory, harassing, or harmful to the center's reputation or the privacy of its families.

Inappropriate Material

Posts containing hate speech, obscenity, or threats that disrupt the learning environment or violate safety standards are grounds for immediate termination.

Conflict Resolution

We encourage parents to address concerns directly with management rather than through public forums to ensure a professional and safe environment for all children.

Family Communication Policy

At River Side Rascals, we value strong partnerships between families and staff. To ensure clear communication, protect the privacy and personal lives of our educators, and maintain an organized environment, all communication must go through official, approved channels.

Brightwheel as Primary Communication

Brightwheel is our primary tool for daily operations, updates, and emergency notifications.

- **Mandatory Notifications:** Parents and guardians are required to keep Brightwheel notifications turned on at all times.
- **Closure & Event Reminders:** Important updates, including weather closures, emergency notices, and event reminders, are sent exclusively through Brightwheel. The center is not responsible for missed information if a family has disabled their app notifications.
- **Absence Reporting:** If your child will be absent, tardy, or picked up early, you must notify the center via Brightwheel message (or by official center phone/text) by 9:00 AM.

Prohibition of Personal Contact

To protect the privacy, safety, and personal boundaries of our teaching staff, families are strictly prohibited from contacting staff and Board members via personal phone numbers, personal email addresses, or personal social media accounts (such as Facebook, Instagram, or personal text messaging).

- ∅ Staff members are directed not to accept friend requests, follow requests, or direct messages from current daycare families on their personal social media accounts unless a personal relation existed prior to enrollment.
- ∅ Staff and Board members are instructed not to respond to work-related inquiries sent to their personal phones or personal emails.

- ∅ Please do not ask teachers for their personal contact information during drop-off or pick-up. All classroom questions must go through Brightwheel.

Business Hours & Response Times

- Official messages sent through Brightwheel will be monitored and answered during our normal operational hours.
- Teachers focus heavily on care and instruction during the day; therefore, non-urgent messages will be addressed during designated planning times or on the next business day.
- Communications sent outside of business hours will be reviewed when the center reopens.

Urgent Matters & Safe Arrival

- For immediate or urgent changes (such as a last-minute emergency pick-up change), please call or text the official center phone line directly rather than relying solely on a message.
- Under our Safe Arrival procedure, if your child is not present by their expected time and we have not received a Brightwheel notice or call by 9:00 AM, staff will reach out to parents or emergency contacts to verify the child's safety.

Policy Enforcement

We appreciate your cooperation in respecting our staff's personal boundaries and utilizing our official software. Repeated attempts to contact staff via personal channels, or a continuous failure to maintain active communication via Brightwheel, violates this policy and may result in a formal review of your family's enrollment status.

Tuition Payment & Billing Policy

Tuition Guarantee: Because operational costs and teacher staffing are secured based on enrollment slots rather than day-to-day attendance, tuition is due in full every billing cycle, regardless of child absences, family vacations, holidays, center closures, or illness. The Board of Directors reviews financials every six months and may adjust rates with a 30-day written notice. Tuition is due before services are received. Parent-Provider agreements will be sent out with every tuition rate adjustment to be completed before rate change takes effect.

If parents or guardians disagree with a tuition rate increase, they may discontinue services by providing a two-week written notice before the new rate takes effect, as outlined in the 30-day written notice they will receive.

Age Group / Schedule	Monthly Rate	Weekly Equivalent
6 Weeks – 2 Years (Infant/Toddler)	$850.00	$196.15
3 Years – 5 Years (Preschool)	$830.00	$191.54

School Age – Summer	$830.00	$191.54
Full-Time After School (excl. Christmas Break)	$250.00	$58.70
Preschool Only / After Pre-K Drop-In	$415.00	$95.77
School Age – Winter Break	$383.08 / 2 Weeks	

Drop-In: $50.00/Day

Full-Time pre-k afternoon Drop-In: $25.00/Half-Day

Payment Schedule

Parents may choose weekly, bi-monthly (default), or monthly billing. Enrolling during the middle of a service period will be pro-rated by the week. Any part of the week attended will be considered a whole week. *(ex. starting on Wednesday will result in the whole week's tuition being billed for that week).*

- ☞ Weekly: Due Saturdays (service period: upcoming week)
- ☞ Bi-Monthly: 1st (service period 1st–15th) and 15th (service period 16th–31st)
- ☞ Monthly: 1st (service period 1–31st)

Payment Methods & Processing Fees

Option A: Bank Account (ACH Transfer) — *Recommended*

- Cost to Parents: $0.00
- Details: River Side Rascals actively absorbs the standard bank processing fees (0.6% + $0.25 per transaction, capped at a maximum of $2.00) to keep this option completely free for our families.

Option B: Credit or Debit Card

- Cost to Parents: 2.95% convenience fee added to the total tuition invoice.
- Details: This processing fee is charged directly by the card processor and is passed entirely to the payer. River Side Rascals does not profit from or retain any portion of this fee.

– If an overpayment is received, it will be applied to your next bill automatically. Refunds may be requested.

– A portion of your childcare expenses may be tax-deductible. Tax statements are automatically created on the Brightwheel app and will notify when available.

– River Side Rascals will, if necessary, use agencies to collect outstanding balances.

Express Collections, 818 S. Joseph St, Rapid City, SD, (605) 341-3328

Mandatory Autopay Enrollment

To maintain a steady, predictable operational budget and ensure our staff can focus entirely on the children, River Side Rascals requires all enrolled families to adhere to our automated billing policy. All tuition billing is managed electronically through the Brightwheel platform.

Payment Method on File:

Every family must maintain at least one current, valid payment method linked to their Brightwheel account. This can be a checked bank account (checking/savings) or a credit/debit card.

Automatic Deductions:

Autopay is mandatory. Tuition will be automatically deducted from your primary payment method on your designated billing schedule.

Late Fees

Failed Payments

If an automatic payment fails due to non-sufficient funds (NSF) on ACH bank payments, a $5.00 NSF fee will be applied. Bounced checks will incur a $33.00 fee

Late Pick-Up Fees

- → Children are to be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. each day. There is no grace period. A late fee of $10.00 for every 15-minute increment will begin accumulating at 5:31 PM.
- → Illness or Injury: If a child becomes ill or injured and a parent/guardian is notified, the child must be picked up within 1 hour of the initial contact. If the child remains at the facility past this 1-hour window, a fee of $10.00 for every 15-minute increment will be charged.

Late fees are not pro-rated. Any minute elapsed within a 15-minute block is considered a full 15 minutes and will be charged the full rate accordingly. For example, picking up a child at 5:35 PM will result in a full $10.00 charge.

Habitual lateness may result in termination of services.

Delinquent Accounts & Disenrollment:

3-Day Grace Period:

Accounts not successfully processed on their automatic billing date will have a 3-day grace period to update their financial information. A $10 late fee is applied three days after an invoice is due. Every week of nonpayment is an additional $10 late fee. A warning letter will be sent, and a payment plan contract will be required. Accounts more than one month delinquent may result in dismissal.

Loss of Placement:

If an account remains unpaid after the grace period, childcare services may be suspended. Continued non-payment will result in the permanent forfeiture of your child's spot, and families wishing to return will be required to reapply through the standard waitlist process.

If you are experiencing hardship, reach out to the Director before missed payment for payment options available to maintain enrollment.

Drop-In Payment Guide

Drop-in spots are not guaranteed and require prior approval each day. Approval depends on available space and required staff-to-child ratios. Drop-in tuition is due each time a child is dropped off at the center.

Recurring drop-in families with signed agreements will be invoiced weekly. Invoices will be sent each Friday for the days attended that week, calculated as the number of days attended multiplied by $50. Payment is due by the following Monday to continue receiving services.

**Fees may be waived at the discretion of the Director in documented emergencies.*

South Dakota Childcare Assistance Accepted

Approval must be received upon enrollment. If approval is not available or state assistance does not begin at the time care starts, families are responsible for paying the full invoice on or before the child's first day of enrollment. Families must follow the regular payment schedule until approval is sent to the center. If applicable, refunds will be returned to the family's bank account after state aid is received.

SD CCA currently does not completely cover tuition rates. Invoices will be set up to reflect the family's certificate and approved reimbursement rate. Co-pay and non-covered tuition balances will be billed to parents weekly to match the CCA payment schedule. Late fee policies apply to the family's portion of the invoice. Autopay is required.

Health and Wellness Policies

River Side Rascals uses positive guidance and developmentally appropriate discipline techniques, including clear expectations, gentle redirection, and support in learning appropriate behaviors. Physical or verbal punishment is never used or tolerated.

If ongoing or serious behavioral concerns arise, staff will collaborate with parents or guardians to develop consistent strategies for the child's success. In circumstances where behaviors continue to pose safety concerns or significantly disrupt the program despite intervention efforts, River Side Rascals may determine that it is unable to meet the child's needs and may discontinue care with appropriate notice. Below are the actions staff will take to de-escalate challenging behaviors.

Chronic Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior Policy and Procedure

The objective of this policy is to establish a structured, constructive, and legally compliant framework for managing chronic disruptive or dangerous behaviors at the center. This policy prioritizes classroom safety and suspension prevention by focusing on proactive behavioral support, data-driven interventions, and active family partnership.

Definition of Behaviors

Chronic Disruptive Behavior- Persistent actions that significantly and repeatedly interrupt the learning environment, group activities, or classroom routines (e.g., non-compliance, extreme tantrums, or regular destruction of materials) after standard guidance techniques have been exhausted.

Dangerous Behavior**-** Actions that pose an immediate risk of physical harm to the child, peers, or staff members. This includes biting that breaks the skin, throwing heavy objects at individuals, kicking, hitting, or running out of supervised areas (elopement).

Step-by-Step Procedure for Immediate Intervention

Step 1: Immediate Safety and De-escalation

- → **Stop the harm:** Intervene immediately to block physical aggression or secure the environment.
- → **Clear the area:** If a child is a danger to others, safely guide peers away from the immediate area rather than isolating the distressed child.
- → **Provide a low-stimulus space:** Accompany the child to a quiet area of the classroom to allow their nervous system to settle. Use a neutral, calm voice and minimal language.

Step 2: Classroom Team Support

- → **Request assistance:** If the primary teacher must provide one-on-one supervision to maintain safety, immediately signal the Center Director or a floating staff member for assistance.
- → **Preserve staff-to-child ratios:** Ensure classroom supervision is never compromised during an active behavioral incident.

Step 3: First-Aid and Post-Incident Care

- → **Treat injuries:** Administer immediate first aid to any injured child or staff member.
- → **Provide comfort:** Separate and comfort any peers who witnessed or were impacted by the event.

Documentation and Behavior Tracking

To ensure interventions are objective and collaborative, staff must document incidents systematically:

- **Incident Reports:** Complete a standard incident report by the end of the shift for any event involving physical injury or immediate safety risks.
- **Behavior Logs (ABC Charting):** For recurring behaviors, teachers must track incidents for 3 to 5 days, noting:
  - → **A (Antecedent):** What happened immediately before the behavior occurred.
  - → **B (Behavior):** A specific, objective description of what the child did.

→ **C (Consequence):** How staff responded and how the incident ended.

Escalation Pathway and Tiered Action Plan

Tier 1: Teacher-Family Consultation

- Trigger: A child exhibits a pattern of chronic disruptive behavior or a single instance of dangerous behavior.
- Action: The lead teacher schedules an informal meeting or call with the family to share observations, review behavior logs, and learn about the child's routines, strengths, and triggers outside the center.

Tier 2: Formal Behavior Support Plan (BSP)

- Trigger: The behavior persists after Tier 1 strategies are implemented, or dangerous behaviors continue.
- Action: The Center Director convenes a formal meeting with the leadership team, lead teachers, and parents to draft a Collaborative Behavior Support Plan.

  Plan Components:

  - Specific environmental adjustments (e.g., changes to seating, transitions, or scheduling).
  - Targeted proactive teaching strategies (e.g., teaching emotional vocabulary, using visual schedules).
  - Agreed-upon, consistent responses to the behavior at home and school.
  - A defined timeline (typically 2 to 3 weeks) to review progress.

Tier 3: Comprehensive Multi-Disciplinary Coordination

- **Trigger:** The Behavior Support Plan does not result in measurable improvement, and the safety of the classroom remains compromised.
- **Action:** With parental consent, the center coordinates with external resources, such as local school district early intervention teams, behavioral specialists, or mental health consultants, to observe the child and refine the support plan.

Strict Limitations on Suspension and Expulsion

In alignment with early childhood best practices, expulsion is viewed as a last resort, utilized only when a child's needs exceed the center's legal scope of care.

- **Prohibition of Unplanned Suspension:** Children may not be sent home early or suspended as a punitive measure. Short-term, planned modifications or early pick-ups may only be used if explicitly written in a Tier 2 or Tier 3 Support Plan as a temporary safety measure.
- **Conditions for Disenrollment:** Disenrollment may only be considered if the family refuses to participate in the BSP process, or if external professional evaluations conclude that the current placement poses an unmanageable safety risk despite the full implementation of all Tier 1–3 interventions.

Child Maltreatment Prevention Policy

River Side Rascals is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect in accordance with ARSD 67:42:17:34. The following practices are prohibited at all times and under all circumstances:

- ∅ Physical punishment of any kind, including hitting, spanking, shaking, pinching, or any action that causes or risks physical harm
- ∅ Emotional abuse, including humiliation, shaming, belittling, or threatening a child
- ∅ Denial of food, water, bathroom access, or sleep as punishment
- ∅ Isolation of a child in a locked or unsupervised space
- ∅ Requiring excessive physical exercise or excessive rest as punishment
- ∅ Placing a child in a situation that exposes them to risk of abuse or exploitation

☞ Any staff member who witnesses or suspects child maltreatment — whether by staff, a parent, or another adult — is a mandatory reporter and must report immediately to South Dakota Child Protection Services (877-244-0864) and notify the Executive Director. Internal investigation does not precede a mandatory report.

☞ All staff receive training on child maltreatment prevention and recognition as part of orientation and ongoing professional development. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to report any concerns about a child's well-being directly to the Executive Director or to SD Child Protection Services.

Incident & Injury Policy

River Side Rascals is committed to maintaining a safe environment and always providing appropriate supervision. Despite reasonable precautions, minor injuries such as bumps, scratches, or falls may occasionally occur during normal play and learning activities.

When an injury or incident occurs:

- → Staff will provide appropriate first aid as needed.
- → Parents or guardians will be notified promptly.
- → An incident report will be completed and shared with the parent/guardian on the same day, in accordance with South Dakota childcare licensing requirements.
- → Serious injuries or incidents requiring medical attention will result in immediate parent/guardian notification and emergency services being contacted if necessary.

All incidents are reviewed by the administration to ensure appropriate follow-up, documentation, and prevention strategies are implemented.

Biting Policy

Biting is a developmentally common behavior in infants and toddlers and is taken seriously at River Side Rascals as a health and safety matter. When a biting incident occurs:

- → Staff will immediately separate the children involved, comfort both the child who was bitten and the child who bit and administer first aid to the affected area.
- → An incident report will be completed and shared with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of both children on the same day.

- → Due to confidentiality requirements, the identity of the child who did the biting will not be disclosed to the other family.
- → Staff will implement positive guidance strategies and environmental adjustments to reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents.
- → If biting behavior continues and poses a safety risk to other children despite intervention efforts, the center may determine it is unable to safely meet the child's needs, and the family may be referred to additional supports, or care may be discontinued with appropriate notice.

Parents are never permitted to approach or discipline another family's child regarding a biting incident. Concerns should be directed at the Lead Teacher or Executive Director.

Sick Policy

To keep your child and our staff healthy, the following sick policy will be strictly enforced. All communicable diseases must be reported to the Director. The child may return to daycare after the initial 24 hours of beginning antibiotics as they are feeling well enough to participate in our daily schedule.

A temperature of 100.4° or above is considered a fever. A feverish student or teacher will not be admitted to the school. If a fever occurs while a student is at school, they must be picked up within 1 hour. Staff will separate a child who becomes ill during the day from the group as much as possible while maintaining appropriate supervision. Parents or guardians will be contacted to pick up when symptoms meet exclusion criteria or when the child cannot comfortably participate in care.

If a parent cannot be reached, emergency contact numbers will be called. Parents will be charged a $10 late fee every 15 minutes beyond the one-hour time allotment. If child is not picked up within 2 hours of notice, staff will defer to the uncollected policy.

Do not send your child to school on days when any one of the following symptoms is present, or if they have had any of these symptoms within 24 hours:

- ∅ Fever (temperature 100.4° and above) or chills
- ∅ Congestion or runny nose
- ∅ Diarrhea
- ∅ Nausea or vomiting
- ∅ Sore throat
- ∅ Cough
- ∅ Symptoms that prevent the child from safely participating in routine care, outdoor play, meals, or rest time
- ∅ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- ∅ Fatigue
- ∅ Muscle or body aches
- ∅ Headache
- ∅ Unexplained rash, open sores, or symptoms requiring medical evaluation before care
- ∅ New loss of taste or smell
- ∅ Inconsolable (child cannot be soothed after many attempts by staff)
- ∅ Discharge of discolored or profuse mucus from the nose
- ∅ Any contagious disease

**A student must not have vomited for 24 hours before returning to school.*

***A student must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.*

Weather permitting, outdoor play is a part of our daily schedule. A student too ill to participate in outdoor activities will not benefit from other learning activities and should remain at home until well.

Please be fair to other parents and children; do not bring your child to daycare if they are ill. We realize you all have obligations, but we must work together to keep our children healthy. One child's cold or runny nose could be another child's bronchitis, asthma attack, or worse. Your cooperation is appreciated, and you will have the assurance that all ill children will be kept home to keep everyone as healthy as possible. We know that we cannot keep illnesses from being passed around in a daycare setting, but this is our attempt to keep them to an absolute minimum.

*Late pickup fees may be waived at the discretion of the Director in documented emergencies.

Mandatory Illness Guidelines

- → Chickenpox – From the appearance of the first skin eruption until scabs are crusted over with no new drainage evident. Exclusion from daycare, typically 7 days.
- → German Measles – Exclusion from daycare for 7 days from the appearance of the first skin eruption.
- → Red Measles – Exclusion from daycare is from the first signs of fever/symptoms to 7 days after the appearance of skin eruptions.
- → Mumps – Exclusion 10–14 days, depending on the disappearance of the swelling of the glands.
- → Strep Sore Throat – Immediate medical attention. Exclusion from daycare 24 hours after initiation of treatment, or until fever and symptoms subside. A child may not return to daycare if a cultured strep test is done, until the results from the test are back, or they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- → Whooping Cough – Immediate medical attention. Exclusion from care 7 days after the onset of therapy.
- → Pinkeye – Exclusion from daycare for 24 hours after initiation of use of prescription medication or until eyes are clear.
- → Impetigo – Immediate medical treatment. Exclusion from daycare 24 hours after initiation of treatment.
- → Ringworm – Immediate medical treatment. Exclusion until the doctor permits them to return to daycare.

- → Head Lice – Treatment with lice-killing shampoo. Parents will have 3 days after treatment to remove all eggs from the child's head. Staff will check the child daily. If any eggs are found, the child's parent will be notified, and the child will need to be removed from childcare until no eggs are found.
- → Scabies – Immediate medical treatment. Exclusion from daycare until treatment, plus person and home cleaning is complete.
- → Hand, Foot, Mouth – Exclude from daycare until mouth lesions are healed and blisters are dry.
- → COVID-19 – Guidelines set by the Department of Health: You can return to daycare when, for at least 24 hours, both are true: Your symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

**You may be required to present a medical release from your child's physician before returning to the daycare. This requirement is at the staff's discretion.*

Inconsolable Children

Our daycare center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and emotionally supportive environment. We recognize that young children—particularly infants, toddlers, and newly enrolled children—frequently experience intense emotional distress, separation anxiety, fatigue, or overstimulation. Staff will respond to inconsolable children with empathy, co-regulation, and individualized care rather than punitive measures, isolation, or dismissal.

Definition of an Inconsolable Child

An Inconsolable Child is defined as a child experiencing persistent, high-intensity crying, screaming, or emotional distress lasting longer than 15 to 20 minutes that does not respond to standard comforting techniques, physical reassurance, or redirection.

Immediate Staff Procedure (First 15 Minutes)

When a child becomes deeply upset or inconsolable, assigned staff will follow a tiered soothing process:

Step 1: Basic Needs Assessment

- → Check and change diapers or soiled clothing.
- → Check for physical discomfort (fever, tight clothing, hunger, thirst, or hidden injury/illness).
- → Check room environment (temperature, lighting level, excessive noise, or sensory overload).

Step 2: One-on-One Comfort & Co-Regulation

- → Offer a designated primary caregiver to hold, rock, or sit quietly with the child in a calm-down space.
- → Use a soft, soothing speaking or singing voice.
- → Offer a comfort object (pacifier, blanket, or favorite toy brought from home, if permitted).

Step 3: Gentle Redirection & Low-Demand Activity

- → Transition the child away from a high-stimulus group setting to a quiet corner with soft cushions or picture books.
- → Lower behavioral and academic expectations temporarily to focus strictly on emotional safety.

Escalation & Team Support (After 15–20 Minutes)

If the child remains inconsolable after 20 minutes of individualized care:

Secondary Staff Intervention: Request a float staff member or center supervisor to step into the classroom so the primary caregiver can give the child uninterrupted, dedicated attention or take a brief break to prevent caregiver burnout.

Health & Medical Screen: Take the child's temperature and assess for symptoms of illness (earache, teething pain, hidden fever, or general lethargy) that may require triggering the Daycare Sick Policy.

Parent / Guardian Notification:

- → Contact the parent or authorized emergency contact to inform them of the child's distress.
- → Collaborate with the parent to identify potential root causes (poor sleep the night before, major home transitions, or illness).
- → If the child remains distressed and cannot be safely or comfortably cared for in a group setting over an extended period (e.g., 1–2 hours of continuous distress), discuss **a Parent Pick-Up Option** strictly as a measure of comfort and health for the child—not as a punishment.

Documentation & Incident Tracking

Staff must log the episode in the daily classroom tracking system or individual child file:

- → Time the crying or distress started and stopped.
- → Soothing methods and interventions attempted.
- → Any physical observations (e.g., warm skin, refusal to drink, signs of teething).
- → Time and summary of parent communication.

Prohibited Practices

Under no circumstances may staff engage in any of the following responses:

- ∅ Corporal punishment, shaking, or physical rough handling.
- ∅ Isolation (placing a child alone in a dark room, closet, or unsupervised area).
- ∅ Emotional shaming, yelling, or verbal berating.
- ∅ Withholding food, water, rest, or comfort items as a consequence.

Ongoing Support & Family Partnership

For children who experience chronic daily inconsolability (such as severe separation anxiety or sensory processing challenges), the director and lead teacher will schedule a Family Partnership Meeting to build an Individualized Support Plan (ISP).

Post Vaccination Policy

To ensure the well-being of all the children in our care, we require parents to notify us of any vaccinations their child receives or will receive. If the child experiences mild effects like low-grade fever or mild soreness, they may still attend daycare if they are otherwise comfortable. However, if the child develops a fever of 100.4 or higher, or experiences other concerning symptoms, they should be kept home, or the parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up. Parents are required to inform us of any post-vaccination symptoms, and the child may return to daycare after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

Staff Health Policy

To protect the health and safety of all children in care, River Side Rascals requires staff to follow the same illness exclusion guidelines that apply to children. Staff who exhibit fever (100.4°F or above), vomiting, diarrhea, contagious rash, or other symptoms listed in the center's Sick Policy may not be present in the facility during the symptomatic period and must meet the same return-to-care criteria as children.

Staff experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness must notify the Executive Director immediately. Staff who have been exposed to a reportable communicable disease should notify the Director so the center can take appropriate precautions and notify families if required by the South Dakota Department of Health.

Medication Policy

All medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name and kept out of reach of children. Medication will be stored according to label instructions and separated from food when required.

Medication to be given during school hours must be given to your child's teacher in its original container, along with signed and dated instructions stating the dosage and the time it is to be administered. Staff will document each administered dose, including the child's name, medication name, date, time, dosage, and staff initials.

Parents are responsible for removing expired medication and replacing emergency medication before expiration. If a medication dose is missed, refused, administered incorrectly, spilled, or otherwise in error, staff will notify the parent or guardian and document the incident.

Emergency rescue medication, such as inhalers or allergy medication, must have written instructions and must be available to staff whenever the child is in care.

Nebulizer treatments will only be administered by staff between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Parents are welcome to come and administer treatments that are needed outside of these times.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent Policy

River Side Rascals promotes sun safety during all outdoor activities. Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child before arrival on sunny days. If a parent wishes for staff to apply sunscreen or insect repellent during the day, the following requirements apply:

- A completed and signed authorization form must be on file.
- The product must be provided by the parent in its original, labeled container with the child's name written on it.
- Staff will apply the product as directed and document application when required.

Sunscreen and insect repellent are stored separately from food and out of reach of children. Products are never applied to broken skin, near eyes or mouth, or in a manner inconsistent with the product label. River Side Rascals is not responsible for adverse reactions to parent-provided products; parents should ensure their child does not have sensitivities to the product before submitting an authorization.

Sanitation, Handwashing, Diapering, and Cleaning

River Side Rascals follows regular sanitation and disease-prevention practices to reduce the spread of illness. Children and staff wash hands upon arrival, before and after meals, after toileting or diapering, after outdoor play, after contact with bodily fluids, and whenever hands are visibly soiled. Diapering and toileting areas are cleaned and disinfected after use. Staff use appropriate hygiene procedures when handling bodily fluids, soiled clothing, food preparation, bottles, and eating surfaces. Toys, tables, cots, mats, high-touch surfaces, bathrooms, and food service areas are cleaned and disinfected on a regular schedule and more often when needed. Soiled clothing will be bagged and sent home. Parents must provide adequate diapers, wipes, and extra clothing so staff can maintain safe and sanitary care.

Screen Time Policy

River Side Rascals limits the use of screens (television, tablets, computers, or other digital media) during the day. Screen time, when used, is limited to educational, developmentally appropriate content and is never used as a substitute for active supervision, outdoor play, or structured programming. Screen time is not used for children under two years of age unless medically indicated. Passive or background screen time (television playing in the background) is not permitted. Parents with questions about the center's daily use of educational media may speak with the Executive Director.

Rest Time

Each day, the children are provided with a designated time frame to take a nap. Children are not required to sleep; however, we do encourage rest time in a quiet area so other children can get the rest they need.

Infant Safe Sleep

For infants under one year of age, River Side Rascals follows safe sleep practices. Infants will be placed on their backs for sleep unless written medical documentation requires an alternate position. Infants will sleep in approved cribs or sleep equipment with a firm mattress and fitted sheet. Soft bedding, pillows, blankets, loose items, stuffed animals, bumper pads, weighted items, and other unsafe sleep materials are not permitted in infant sleep spaces. Staff will supervise sleeping infants and check on them regularly. If an infant falls asleep in equipment not intended for routine sleep, staff will move the infant to an approved sleep surface as soon as possible. Parents may not request unsafe sleep practices.

Safety Policies

Hazardous Materials Policy

River Side Rascals handles, stores, and disposes of hazardous materials in accordance with ARSD 67:42:17:37. All cleaning products, disinfectants, sanitizers, pesticides, aerosols, medications, and other potentially hazardous substances are stored in locked or inaccessible locations out of reach of children at all times. Hazardous materials are never stored near or with food, food preparation areas, or children's personal belongings.

Only products that are appropriate for use in a licensed childcare facility and safe for use around children are permitted on the premises. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS/SDS) are maintained on site for all applicable products and are available to staff. Hazardous waste and soiled or contaminated materials are disposed of in a leakproof, nonabsorbent, covered container with a tight-fitting lid.

Pest control treatments are scheduled outside of operational hours whenever possible, and parents will be notified if chemical treatments require a period of ventilation or restricted access.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

River Side Rascals maintains emergency procedures to protect children, staff, and visitors during medical emergencies, fire, severe weather, evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, utility failure, missing child situations, or other unexpected events. Staff will remain with and always supervise children during an emergency and will follow the Director or designee's instructions.

The center's emergency plan includes procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, family communication, parent reunification, emergency supplies, continuity of operations, and accommodation for infants, toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with medical needs.

In the event of an evacuation, staff will take attendance records, emergency contact information, required medications, and emergency supplies when safely possible. Staff will account for all children before leaving the building, upon arrival at the designated meeting area, and before releasing any child to an authorized adult.

If the building is unsafe, children will be moved to a designated relocation site or another safe location determined by the Director or emergency responders. Parents or guardians will be notified through Brightwheel, phone, or other available communication methods with pickup or reunification instructions.

Shelter-in-place may be used when outside conditions are unsafe, including severe weather, hazardous material concerns, law enforcement activity, or other threats. Lockdown procedures may be used when there is a safety threat near or inside the facility. During shelter-in-place or lockdown, staff will keep children supervised, calm, and away from hazards to the greatest extent possible.

Emergency drills will be practiced and documented as required by South Dakota licensing rules, including evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown procedures. New staff will be informed of the emergency preparedness plan during orientation. Parents may request information about the emergency plan from the Director, except for details that must remain confidential for safety reasons.

Water Safety Policy

River Side Rascals maintains supervision standards to protect children from water-related hazards in accordance with ARSD 67:42:17:30. Children in care are never permitted to play in or near any body of water — including wading pools, standing water, or natural water bodies — unless a supervising staff member can see and hear the child and is in a position to intervene immediately.

Hot tubs on or near the premises must be securely covered at all times when children are present. Water play activities (such as sensory bins or shallow wading pools) must be directly supervised at all times, and water containers are emptied and stored appropriately after use. Parents will be notified in advance of any water-related activity that occurs outside the standard daily schedule.

Pet Policy

River Side Rascals does not currently keep animals or pets on the premises. In the event that an animal is brought to the center for an educational activity or special event, advance written notice will be provided to all families, and the following standards will apply: the animal must be clean, vaccinated, and healthy with documentation available; children will never be left unsupervised with an animal; staff will monitor for allergic reactions; and any parent who notifies the center of a child's animal allergy will have that child separated from the activity. Families with known animal allergies must notify the Director in writing so accommodations can be arranged.

Field Trip and Off-Site Activity Policy

River Side Rascals may occasionally organize off-site activities or walking field trips within the local community. The following requirements apply:

- → Written parental permission is required before a child may participate in any off-site or walking activity.
- → Required staff-to-child ratios must be maintained at all times during off-site activities.
- → Emergency contact information, allergy information, emergency medication, and a first aid kit will accompany staff on all off-site activities.
- → Children will be accounted for by name at departure, upon arrival at the destination, and at all times during the activity.
- → Parents will be notified of the activity date, destination, departure and return times.
- → Vehicle transportation by staff is prohibited.

Transportation

Transportation will not be provided by River Side Rascals. Parents/guardians are responsible for all transportation of their child(ren). If the destination is within walking distance, and approval is given by the director, the staff may walk the child(ren) to their destination with written authorization per the Field Trip and Off-Site Activity Policy.

Playground and Outdoor Safety Policy

River Side Rascals maintains a safe outdoor environment in accordance with ARSD 67:42:17:35. The outdoor play area is enclosed by a fence measuring at least four feet high. Playground equipment is inspected regularly and maintained in good repair according to the manufacturer's instructions. The play area is kept free of debris, weeds, trash, standing water, and other hazards. Staff conduct a visual safety inspection of the outdoor play space before children are permitted outside each day.

Children are supervised at all times during outdoor play. Equipment that poses a safety risk is taken out of service immediately and not returned to use until repaired or replaced. River Side Rascals reserves the right to cancel outdoor

play during weather that poses a safety risk, including extreme heat, severe cold, lightning, or hazardous air quality. Children who are too ill to participate in outdoor play are considered too ill to attend care, as outlined in the Sick Policy.

Weapons-Free Policy

River Side Rascals is a weapons-free facility. No individual — including parents, guardians, staff, volunteers, or visitors — may bring a firearm, ammunition, knife, or any other weapon onto the center's premises, whether concealed or openly carried, unless they are a law enforcement officer acting in an official capacity. Toy weapons or realistic-looking toy replicas are also not permitted on the premises.

Violation of this policy is grounds for immediate termination of enrollment and/or employment and may result in notification of law enforcement. This policy applies to all areas of the facility including parking areas, outdoor play spaces, and all interior spaces.

South Dakota Licensing Compliance

River Side Rascals complies with all South Dakota Department of Social Services childcare licensing requirements, including staff qualifications, background checks, staff-to-child ratios, and facility safety standards. Licensing inspections occur annually and are unannounced to ensure ongoing compliance.

Staff complete all mandatory training requirements and maintain current First Aid and CPR certifications.

Ratios maintained (ARSD 67:42:17:18–19):

Age Group	Staff-to-Child Ratio
Infant (6 weeks – under 18 months)	1:5
Toddler (18 months – under 3 years)	1:5
Preschool (3 years – under kindergarten)	1:10
School-Age	1:15

Staff Training and Professional Development Policy

River Side Rascals complies with all South Dakota staff training requirements under ARSD 67:42:17:16 and 67:42:17:17. All new staff and volunteers with direct child contact complete a center orientation before being left alone with children. Orientation includes a review of all center policies and procedures, emergency preparedness plans, child

maltreatment prevention, mandated reporting obligations, safe sleep practices, medication administration procedures, and health and sanitation protocols.

Staff must maintain current pediatric first aid and CPR certifications as required by South Dakota licensing. Ongoing training hours are completed annually as required by state licensing rules. Training records are maintained in each staff member's personnel file and are available for review by the South Dakota Department of Social Services upon request.

River Side Rascals supports staff participation in professional development opportunities related to early childhood education, child development, health and safety, and program quality.

Insurance & Liability

River Side Rascals carries general liability insurance as part of our commitment to providing a safe and responsible childcare environment for children, families, and staff.

South Dakota childcare licensing regulations do not require childcare centers to carry medical or accident insurance for enrolled children. Families are responsible for maintaining their child's personal health insurance coverage.

River Side Rascals takes reasonable precautions to maintain a safe facility and follows all applicable South Dakota childcare licensing regulations related to supervision, health, safety, and emergency preparedness. In the event of an injury or incident, parents or guardians will be notified promptly, and required documentation and reporting will be completed in accordance with state regulations.

**Nothing in this handbook is intended to waive or limit any rights or responsibilities established by applicable law.*

Parent/Community Involvement and Board Participation

River Side Rascals values the active involvement of families in our community and governance. As a nonprofit organization, we are governed by a Board of Directors responsible for overseeing the center's mission, financial health, and strategic direction.

Parents and guardians of enrolled children are encouraged to participate in the governance process by joining the Board of Directors. To begin this process, interested individuals may express their interest by contacting the center director or current board members. Prospective board members typically undergo a nomination and election process as outlined in the organization's bylaws.

Serving on the board is a meaningful way to contribute to the center's success, help shape policies, and ensure the continued delivery of high-quality care and education.

Donations and In-Kind Support

River Side Rascals is recognized as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity. Families and community members may support our mission by donating new or gently used toys, books, classroom supplies, art materials, child-care essentials, office supplies, and other useful items that help strengthen our programs and learning environments.

Please contact the Executive Director before bringing in a donation so the center can confirm that the item is currently needed and meets applicable health, safety, licensing, age-appropriateness, and storage requirements. River Side Rascals may decline items that cannot be safely used or stored. Donors should not leave items at the center without prior approval.

Upon request, River Side Rascals can provide a written acknowledgment describing accepted donated property. Donors are responsible for determining and documenting the value of noncash donations; the center does not assign a value to donated items.

Because River Side Rascals is a qualified public charity, eligible donations may be deductible on a donor’s federal income tax return when applicable tax requirements are met. Tax treatment depends on the donor’s individual circumstances, recordkeeping, and current law. Donors should retain the center’s acknowledgment and their purchase receipts or other records and consult a qualified tax professional or current IRS guidance. No goods or services are provided in exchange for a donation unless specifically stated in writing.

Community Business and Organization Support

Community businesses, service clubs, foundations, faith-based groups, and other organizations can help River Side Rascals continue providing dependable, affordable childcare. Support may include sponsoring a classroom, learning activity, family event, staff training opportunity, playground or facility improvement, scholarship or tuition-assistance fund, meal or snack program, or another approved need.

Organizations may also contribute through monetary gifts, matching-gift programs, grants, donated goods or professional services, employee volunteer projects, fundraising partnerships, or by helping share information about the center’s mission and current needs. All sponsorships, volunteer activities, fundraising arrangements, and donated services must be coordinated in advance with the Executive Director and may require Board approval to ensure they are appropriate, safe, and consistent with licensing requirements and the center’s nonprofit mission.

Community partners benefit by investing directly in children, working families, workforce stability, and the long-term strength of the Chamberlain area. When appropriate and agreed upon in advance, River Side Rascals may recognize supporters in center communications, at sponsored events, on approved signage or materials, or through other acknowledgments that respect child and family privacy. Sponsorship does not provide influence over enrollment, staffing, curriculum, purchasing, or Board decisions, and recognition is subject to center approval.

Because River Side Rascals is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity, qualifying gifts may be deductible as charitable contributions, subject to applicable law. The center can provide an acknowledgment describing the contribution and will disclose the value of any goods or services provided in return, when applicable. Each business or organization is responsible for determining the tax treatment and marketing value of its support and should consult its tax or legal adviser. To discuss current needs or develop a sponsorship or partnership, contact the Executive Director.

Suggestions and Comments from Parents

River Side Rascals encourages parents to submit any concerns, questions, or comments that they may have at www.riversiderascals.org/parent-page Code: 2000. The Parent Board will review these at our monthly board meetings.

Parent Grievance Policy & Procedure

At River Side Rascals, we value open communication and strive to provide the highest quality care for your child. We understand that concerns may arise, and we are committed to resolving them promptly and fairly. This policy outlines the steps for parents or guardians to address grievances without fear of retaliation.

Step 1: Informal Resolution (Initial Discussion)

Most concerns can be resolved through direct, respectful communication. We encourage parents to first discuss any issues with their child's Lead Teacher.

Goal: To resolve the issue immediately at the classroom level.

Step 2: Formal Written Grievance

If the concern involves the teacher or the informal discussion does not reach a satisfactory resolution, or if the issue is of a serious nature, the parent should submit a Formal Grievance Form to the Executive Director or can fold and place into the Drop Box next to the clock-in station.

Submission:

The written grievance should include the date, a detailed description of the concern, and the desired outcome. Grievance forms are available next to the clock-in station and on www.riversiderascals.org/transparency. You may also email grievance@riversiderascals.org with the subject line "Formal Grievance."

Investigation:

The Executive Director will investigate the matter, which may include interviewing staff and reviewing records.

Response:

You will receive a written response or a request for a follow-up meeting within 5–7 business days.

Step 3: Board of Directors Review

If you feel the Executive Director's decision does not align with center policy or the best interest of your child, you may request a final internal review by the Board of Directors.

Request:

Submit your request at www.riversiderascals.org/transparency using the submission form or email the Board of Directors via grievance@riversiderascals.org with the subject "Grievance Review Request."

Board Action:

The Board (or a designated committee) will review the documentation. They may choose to uphold the Director's decision or propose an alternative solution.

Finality:

The Board's decision is final regarding internal center operations.

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation: All grievance proceedings will be kept as confidential as possible, involving only those necessary to resolve the issue. No family will be penalized, or child enrollment jeopardized, for raising good-faith concern.

**Grievances must go through the Executive Director before the Board of Directors can review them unless the grievance is about the Executive Director. In that case, the Board of Directors is the first point of contact.*

Mandatory Reporting and Required Licensing Reports

All River Side Rascals staff are mandatory reporters. Any suspicion of child abuse or neglect must be reported to South Dakota Child Protection Services or local law enforcement as required by law. Staff do not investigate suspected abuse or neglect internally before making a report.

River Side Rascals will also complete required reports to South Dakota DSS Child Care Licensing for reportable incidents, serious injuries, emergencies, suspected abuse or neglect concerns, or changes in circumstances as required by current licensing rules. Parents or guardians will be notified of incidents involving their child unless notification interferes with an investigation or child safety.

External Reporting

While we hope to resolve all issues internally, parents always have the right to contact state regulatory agencies regarding safety or licensing violations:

- ☞ South Dakota DSS: (800) 227-3020
- ☞ Child Protective Services (CPS): (877) 244-0864
- ☞ After hours: Contact local authorities about emergent situations

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the River Side Rascals Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are designed to promote the health, safety, and well-being of all children and families served by the center.

I agree to comply with the policies, procedures, tuition obligations, and expectations described in the handbook. I understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in corrective action or termination of services, as outlined in the handbook.

I understand that policies may be updated as required by licensing regulations or operational needs. I will be notified of any policy changes through written communication or Brightwheel messaging.

This handbook does not waive or limit any rights or responsibilities established by applicable South Dakota law.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

2nd Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Executive Director Signature: _____ Date: _____