



River Side Rascals

Staff Handbook

Policies, Procedures & Expectations

"Where Every Child Matters, Every Day"

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Legal Notice | 4 |
| Welcome Letter | 4 |
| Handbook Purpose | 5 |
| Section 1 – Mission Statement | 5 |
| Section 2 – Operational Information | 5 |
| 2.1 Contact Information | 5 |
| 2.2 Regular Hours of Operation | 6 |
| 2.3 Non-Profit Status..... | 6 |
| 2.4 State Regulations | 6 |
| 2.5 Staff-to-Child Ratios | 7 |
| Section 3 – Expectations & Employment Policies | 7 |
| 3.1 Equal Opportunity Employer..... | 7 |
| 3.2 Employment-At-Will..... | 8 |
| 3.3 Working Conditions | 8 |
| 3.4 Training..... | 8 |
| Orientation Training..... | 8 |
| Professional Development | 9 |
| CDA Covered Costs Policy | 9 |
| 3.5 New Employees & Orientation | 10 |
| 3.6 Employment Classifications | 10 |
| 3.7 Voluntary Resignation Process | 10 |
| Section 4 – Payroll & Time | 11 |
| 4.1 Pay Schedule | 11 |
| 4.2 Salary Structure | 11 |
| 4.3 Clocking In & Out..... | 11 |
| 4.4 Overtime | 11 |
| 4.5 Holidays & Paid Time Off (PTO) | 12 |
| 4.6 Unscheduled Closures & Late Starts | 12 |
| 4.7 Meals & Breaks | 13 |
| 4.8 Staff Meetings | 13 |
| 4.9 Jury Duty | 13 |
| Section 5 – Benefits | 13 |
| 5.1 Adjusted Child Rates | 13 |
| 5.2 Opportunity for Bonuses..... | 14 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Holiday Bonus | 14 |
| Team Achievement Bonus | 14 |
| Referral Bonus..... | 15 |
| Conditions Applicable to All Bonuses..... | 15 |
| 5.3 Health Insurance | 15 |
| 5.4 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) | 15 |
| 5.5 Retirement..... | 15 |
| Section 6 – Performance Reviews..... | 16 |
| Section 7 – Disciplinary Procedures & Grievances..... | 16 |
| 7.1 Disciplinary Procedures..... | 16 |
| Verbal Warning | 17 |
| Written Warning..... | 17 |
| Termination | 17 |
| 7.2 Grievances | 17 |
| Section 8 – Staff Code of Conduct..... | 18 |
| 8.1 Personal Conduct & Appearance..... | 18 |
| 8.2 Attendance Policy..... | 18 |
| Reporting an Absence or Tardiness | 18 |
| Unacceptable Attendance Patterns..... | 18 |
| Shift Coverage | 19 |
| 8.3 Drugs & Alcohol | 19 |
| 8.4 Transportation..... | 19 |
| 8.5 Housekeeping..... | 19 |
| 8.6 Telephone & Cell Phone Use | 20 |
| 8.7 Social Media Use Policy | 20 |
| 8.8 Communication with Parents | 20 |
| 8.9 Fundraising & Community Events | 21 |
| 8.10 Relationships with Competitors | 21 |
| 8.11 Insubordination..... | 21 |
| 8.12 Harassment | 21 |
| 8.13 Whistleblower Protection..... | 22 |
| Section 9 – Conflict of Interest Policy | 22 |
| 9.1 Purpose..... | 22 |
| 9.2 Definition of Conflict of Interest | 22 |
| 9.3 Disclosure Requirements | 23 |

9.4 Resolution of Conflicts 23

9.5 Annual Acknowledgment 23

Section 10 – Child Care Policies 24

10.1 Discipline Philosophy 24

10.2 Confidentiality 24

10.3 Surveillance 24

10.4 Absentee and Safe Arrival 25

10.5 Mandatory Reporting 25

10.6 Fire Safety 25

10.7 Health & Infection Control 26

Section 11 – CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)..... 26

11.1 Program Overview 26

11.2 Staff Responsibilities 26

11.3 Recordkeeping Requirements..... 27

11.4 Training 27

11.5 Civil Rights Compliance 27

11.6 Program Integrity..... 28

Section 12 – Workers’ Compensation & Injury Reporting 28

12.1 Workers’ Compensation Coverage..... 28

12.2 Reporting a Work-Related Injury or Illness 28

 Step-by-Step Injury Reporting Procedure..... 28

12.3 Near-Miss Reporting..... 29

12.4 Return to Work 29

12.5 Employee Responsibilities 29

Section 13 – Emergency Procedures 29

13.1 Missing Child 30

13.2 Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm..... 30

13.3 Fire 30

13.4 Power Outage 30

13.5 Public Threat 31

Section 14 – Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook..... 32

 Employee Acknowledgment 32

Legal Notice

This manual does not constitute a contract. River Side Rascals reserves the right to modify or change the contents of this manual in its sole discretion. Nothing in this manual shall be construed to alter an employee's status as being an employee-at-will, subject to discharge at the discretion of River Side Rascals without cause or prior notice. Employees will be informed of significant policy changes as they occur. This handbook is not considered inclusive of all employment policies of River Side Rascals.

Welcome Letter

Dear Staff,

We are excited to have you join our team in providing a nurturing, safe, and enriching environment for the children in our care. Our goal is to foster learning, growth, and development through compassionate care, teamwork, and respect. This handbook is your guide to the policies and procedures that ensure we work together to achieve that mission.

We encourage you to read this handbook carefully and reach out to the Executive Director or any member of the Board of Directors with questions, suggestions, or requests for clarification. Your voice matters here.

Sincerely,

Board President: Aran Anderson

Executive Director: Alyson Lynch

Board Vice President: Shanell Waugh

Board Treasurer: Cassidy Snow

Board Secretary: Shana Hloucha

Board Member: Heather Rabern

Handbook Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide and reference to the basic functioning of River Side Rascals. As you continue employment with River Side Rascals, please let the Executive Director or any member of the Board of Directors know if you find any information confusing, in need of clarification, or have suggestions for additional content.

Section 1 – Mission Statement

To provide exceptional, community-focused childcare that supports children’s development and strengthens families.

Section 2 – Operational Information

2.1 Contact Information

| Role / Field | Details |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Executive Director | Alyson Lynch |
| Email | CEO@riversiderascals.org |
| Address | 112 W 16th Ave, Chamberlain, SD |
| Phone | 605-234-2000 |

2.2 Regular Hours of Operation

River Side Rascals is open **Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM**. No early arrivals or late pickups are allowed.

The daycare is closed during the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Adjustments to holiday closures may be made if the holiday falls on a weekend. For example, if a holiday falls on a Saturday, the daycare may close the Friday prior. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the daycare may close the following Monday. Final determination of any adjustments is made by the Executive Director and Board of Directors at a minimum of **two weeks before** the scheduled holiday.

At times, additional closures may be necessary and will be communicated by the Executive Director.

Please see **Section 4.5** for information on unscheduled daycare closures and late starts.

2.3 Non-Profit Status

River Side Rascals is a **nonprofit daycare facility**. As a nonprofit, our primary goal is to benefit the community and not operate for financial gain. We strive to provide affordable childcare, allowing parents to work. We rely on grants and fundraising efforts in addition to childcare rates.

A volunteer **Board of Directors** governs River Side Rascals. The Board is comprised of parents or guardians of children or former children who attended River Side Rascals and/or interested community members. The Board meets at a minimum once a month, typically on the first Monday of the month.

The Executive Director also attends to facilitate communication and be a valued voice of the staff.

Staff members are encouraged to bring suggestions, questions, or concerns to the Executive Director so they can be brought to the attention of the Board. Staff are welcome to attend Board meetings to bring their concerns professionally.

2.4 State Regulations

River Side Rascals operates under the regulations of the **South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS)**. There are annual surveys and in-person inspections to ensure the daycare is meeting all requirements. These may be unannounced. All staff are expected to maintain full compliance with state regulations at all times.

2.5 Staff-to-Child Ratios

In compliance with regulations, River Side Rascals adheres to the following staff-to-child ratios:

| Age Range | Staff-to-Child Ratio |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 weeks to 3 years | 1 staff per 5 children |
| 3 years to 5 years | 1 staff per 10 children |
| 6 years to 12 years | 1 staff per 15 children |

River Side Rascals has **4 classrooms**:

- Infant Room
- Toddler Room
- Preschool Room
- Main play and dining area

There is also a kitchen, staff bathroom, laundry area, cleaning closet, and additional storage for various materials. The **outdoor fenced play area** is available for all children.

Section 3 – Expectations & Employment Policies

3.1 Equal Opportunity Employer

River Side Rascals is an **equal opportunity employer** and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. All employment decisions are based solely on qualifications, experience, and the needs of the organization.

3.2 Employment-At-Will

In accordance with South Dakota state law, employees of River Side Rascals are employed on an **at-will basis**, meaning that employment can be terminated by River Side Rascals or by the employee at any time with no reason required. This employee handbook shall not be considered evidence of any employment contract and shall not be considered inclusive of all employment policies of River Side Rascals.

3.3 Working Conditions

The building is up to code, has proper ventilation, and receives regular maintenance. River Side Rascals is a **non-smoking facility**. If staff do smoke, they must be off campus grounds and are responsible for the collection and disposal of all associated waste.

Respectful Environment: All staff are expected to contribute to a respectful, inclusive, and supportive workplace culture. Open and honest communication with colleagues, families, and supervisors is crucial to the success of our programs. We encourage collaboration and value each staff member's contribution to the team's success. Staff are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity. River Side Rascals has **zero tolerance** for workplace harassment or violence.

3.4 Training

Orientation Training

All new staff must complete the following training **prior to working directly with children:**

- CPR & First Aid
- DSS Mandatory Reporter Training (Child Abuse and Neglect under SD Law)
- Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases
- Safe Sleep Practices and Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Administration of Medications in Childcare
- Building and Physical Premises Safety
- Appropriate Precautions in Transporting Children
- Prevention and Response to Emergencies Due to Food and Allergic Reactions
- Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials and Biocontainment
- Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning
- Child Development
- CACFP Meal Pattern and Program Requirements (see Section 11)

The **Executive Director and kitchen staff** will additionally complete Food Safety training.

Note: If any training was completed before starting work and is non-expired, staff must submit verification of completion to the Executive Director within **90 days** of their start date.

Professional Development

Every year, staff must complete **10 hours of training** relevant to any of the subjects listed within orientation training. This may be completed through various platforms, including South Dakota State University online. The Executive Director assists with account setup and finding relevant training opportunities.

As available and able, staff may attend off-site trainings or conferences. Arrangements will be made and announced by the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Directors.

CDA Covered Costs Policy

Purpose: The objective of this policy is to define the terms and conditions under which an employee will receive financial support for obtaining a **Child Development Associate (CDA)** credential, with all related costs covered by River Side Rascals.

Reimbursement Details: River Side Rascals agrees to cover the costs for the following CDA-related expenses:

- CDA application fee
- CDA renewal fee
- Costs associated with non-instructor-led training (including online courses, workshops, and study materials)

Work Commitment: In consideration of River Side Rascals' payment of CDA certification costs, the employee commits to continued employment with River Side Rascals for a minimum period of **three (3) years** from the date of initial payment.

Repayment Clause: Should the employee voluntarily resign or be terminated before fulfilling the three-year commitment, the employee agrees to reimburse River Side Rascals for the entire amount of CDA-related expenses paid on their behalf. Repayment must be completed in full within **thirty (30) days** of the termination date, unless mutually agreed upon in writing.

3.5 New Employees & Orientation

After the interview, the Executive Director will wait for the background check to be returned and put together an offer based on experience and qualifications. Once both parties agree to the offer, the new staff will be invited to Gusto to complete mandatory IRS and state forms to be completed by the end of the employee's first day.

Review of all policies and signed agreements/policies due by the first payroll.

All orientation and required training must be completed before working directly with children.

Employees are encouraged to complete training as soon as offer has been accepted.

During the first month, the new employee will complete in-house training provided by the Executive Director and co-workers. The Executive Director keeps a checklist of all necessary training.

3.6 Employment Classifications

Staff work a variety of shift rotations to provide the necessary staff-to-child ratios throughout the daycare center and rooms. Positions may be subject to change as ratios and enrollment needs change. Employment classifications and scheduled hours will be communicated at the time of hire.

3.7 Voluntary Resignation Process

River Side Rascals requests that all staff provide a **written notice of resignation at least two weeks in advance**. This notice allows us to adjust schedules and ensure adequate coverage for our programs. If you can provide more than two weeks' notice, it is greatly appreciated, as it helps us plan for advertising, hiring, and training new team members.

Please submit your resignation notice in writing (email or letter) to the Executive Director. If your decision to resign is related to a workplace concern, we encourage you to discuss the issue with the Executive Director or a Board member. We value open communication and are committed to working together to resolve concerns whenever possible.

After receiving your notice, we may schedule an **exit interview** to discuss your experience and assist with a smooth transition.

Section 4 – Payroll & Time

4.1 Pay Schedule

Staff are paid hourly throughout the work week, Monday to Friday. Staff receive a paycheck **every two weeks**, issued in the form of **direct deposit via Gusto**.

4.2 Salary Structure

| Grade | Role Examples | Pay Range | Notes |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Aide, Float, Kitchen | \$13.50–\$15.50/hr | Entry level |
| 2 | Lead Teacher | \$15.50–\$17.50/hr | CDA preferred |
| 3 | Assistant Director | \$16.50–\$18.50/hr | Supervisory |
| 4 | Director / Admin | \$37k–\$42.5k/yr | Management |

4.3 Clocking In & Out

Staff are expected to arrive on time for their shift. Staff are allowed to clock in up to **5 minutes ahead** of their start time. Any earlier clock-ins must be pre-approved by the Executive Director. If not approved, the time sheet will be adjusted back to the scheduled shift start time. Staff must clock out when their shift is completed unless authorized by the Executive Director.

Important: Any altering, tampering with, or recording time on another employee’s time record is considered a **serious offense** and grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

4.4 Overtime

Overtime is discouraged. Staff must obtain **prior approval** from the Executive Director before working overtime. If approval is not obtained in advance, progressive disciplinary action will be pursued.

Overtime pay is calculated in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

4.5 Holidays & Paid Time Off (PTO)

The majority of holidays observed by River Side Rascals are **unpaid**. Christmas and Thanksgiving are paid holidays.

Full-time employees are granted **48 hours of paid time off (PTO)** per calendar year (January to December), which may be used at their discretion.

To request PTO, staff must notify the Executive Director in advance — at a minimum **by the Friday before payday**. Requests submitted after this deadline may be denied.

PTO Guidelines:

- PTO must be taken in increments of **15 minutes**
- PTO cannot be used if it would result in overtime hours
- Up to **20 hours** of unused PTO may be requested and approved by the Executive Director to carry over to the following year if PTO was unable to be used due to staffing shortages.
- PTO may **not** be used during the final two weeks of employment
- PTO is not paid out after termination of employment

There is a separate Unpaid Leave policy to be used once all PTO has been exhausted. Exhausting Unpaid Leave will risk the employee's Full-time status and their benefits received. Employees will then be put on an action plan agreement to regain Full-time status and benefits. The Executive Director will reach out when the employee is nearing that risk.

**Exceptions will be considered when hours are shortened due to Executive decisions.*

Staff are encouraged to reach out to the Executive Director in advance to utilize flexible scheduling for Time off without usage of PTO bank.

4.6 Unscheduled Closures & Late Starts

Occasionally, the daycare may close outside of regular holidays due to staff training, events, or illness affecting staffing ratios. These closures are **unpaid**; however, staff may use approved PTO, attend as normal and clean & sanitize or complete required annual training during these closures with Executive Director approval. Decisions regarding unscheduled closures are made by the Executive Director.

Unexpected closures, early releases, or late starts will be communicated to staff, parents, and guardians by the Executive Director as soon as possible.

Weather-Related Closures:

- If Chamberlain Public Schools calls a **late start**, River Side Rascals will open at **8:30 AM**
- If Chamberlain Public Schools is **closed for the day**, River Side Rascals will open at **9:30 AM**, unless otherwise updated
- If **interstates are closed**, River Side Rascals will also close

The Executive Director will lead all communication during weather events and will provide updates if circumstances change.

4.7 Meals & Breaks

Staff may eat meals provided to children or bring their own food. To leave the facility during a break, staff must obtain approval from the Executive Director and clock out to ensure child-staff ratios are maintained.

4.8 Staff Meetings

Staff meetings occur **monthly** to provide staff with timely updates on Board of Directors discussions and to discuss the operations of the daycare. Meetings are called by the Executive Director. Lead Staff should expect to give a short report of their respective classrooms regarding needs, purchase requests, and concerns. Staff are welcome to submit topic suggestions and offer input on changes to consider for the future.

4.9 Jury Duty

Staff are expected to **notify the Executive Director promptly** upon receiving a jury summons so that shift coverage planning can begin. While River Side Rascals is unable to pay for time spent on jury duty, staff will not be penalized for hours missed while fulfilling this legal obligation.

Section 5 – Benefits

5.1 Adjusted Child Rates

Staff with children attending River Side Rascals receive a **discounted childcare rate** based on years of service, as outlined in the table below. The discount applies to **up to 2 children**; staff will pay full price for any additional children beyond 2.

| Years of Service | Discount |
|------------------|----------|
| 1 year | 30% |
| 3 years | 40% |
| 5 years | 50% |

The center reserves the right to limit staff discounts to [4] total "discounted spots" at any one time to ensure center solvency.

The Executive Director’s discounted child rate will be a negotiated rate subject to Board of Directors approval.

5.2 Opportunity for Bonuses

Holiday Bonus

During the winter holiday season, eligible employees will receive a paid time bonus as follows:

| Employee Category | Paid Bonus Time |
|--|-----------------|
| Employees working fewer than 30 hours/week | 10 hours |
| Employees working 30 hours/week or more | 20 hours |
| Executive Director | 30 hours |

This bonus is intended to show appreciation and support during the holiday season and will be paid out with the **final payroll of the calendar year**.

Team Achievement Bonus

Team bonuses are based on collective success in areas such as:

- Training Targets

- Compliance with Safety and Licensing Standards
- Positive Parent Feedback
- Staff Retention and Morale
- Special Projects or Events

The amount and distribution may vary depending on the goal met and available budget.

Referral Bonus

Referral bonuses are intended to reward employees who help address staffing shortages. Staff receive a **flat rate of \$200** after the referred employee has worked **180 days**.

Conditions Applicable to All Bonuses

- Bonuses are subject to **budget availability**
- Employees must be in **good standing** (no disciplinary actions in the past 3 months)
- All bonuses are **taxable** and reported as supplemental income

5.3 Health Insurance

River Side Rascals is currently unable to provide health benefits to staff. Staff are eligible to purchase private insurance through the government-sponsored **Health Insurance Marketplace** at healthcare.gov.

5.4 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

By South Dakota law, staff who meet eligibility requirements may receive up to **12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave** for a qualifying reason. **Advanced written notice** to the Executive Director and Board of Directors is required when leave is foreseeable.

The applicable staff member must notify the Executive Director of their anticipated return date and remain in regular communication. If a staff member fails to return communication after repeated contact attempts by the Executive Director, their non-response may be treated as a **voluntary resignation** at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

5.5 Retirement

At this time, River Side Rascals is unable to provide a pre-tax retirement benefit or employer match. However, we strongly encourage staff to connect with a financial representative to open a personal **Roth IRA** or other retirement savings account.

To see your current estimated social security benefits, staff are encouraged to create an account at https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=174388179&gclid=CjwKCAjw5ZXQBhBdEiwAI5XVWZYWshyXcV27cYoz6YGc3kxoAsoCswMAwflsxCOI_GCZtX3EBW-fLxoCfYEQA vD_BwE

Section 6 – Performance Reviews

Annually, the Executive Director will meet with each staff member individually to discuss their performance and establish professional goals. With a positive performance review, if the budget allows, staff will be eligible for a **raise or bonus** dependent on their review score. The Executive Director receives the Annual Budget at the beginning of each fiscal year in January and a budget review every 6 months from the Board of Directors.

To ensure staff is on track to reach their goals, the Executive Director will conduct a **mid-year check-in review** with each staff member to monitor progress and provide feedback between annual reviews.

Section 7 – Disciplinary Procedures & Grievances

7.1 Disciplinary Procedures

Violation of River Side Rascals policies, rules, and/or code of conduct may warrant disciplinary action. Methods of **progressive discipline** that River Side Rascals may elect to use include verbal corrections, written warnings, final written warnings, suspension, and/or termination. The system is not strictly formal — River Side Rascals may, at its sole and absolute discretion, deviate from any order of progressive disciplinary action and utilize whatever form of discipline is deemed appropriate under the circumstances, up to and including **immediate termination** of employment. Efforts for progressive discipline in no way limit or alter the at-will employment relationship.

Verbal Warning

The staff member is informed of the violation or failure to meet policy, procedure, or performance expectations. The Executive Director documents the verbal warning conversation and places it in the employee's file. The staff member will be notified of when a follow-up will occur.

Written Warning

If the issue persists after a verbal warning and follow-up, the progression is a formal written warning with an improvement plan that is **signed by both the staff member and the Executive Director**. This is filed in the employee's file. At this time, the Executive Director will also notify the Board of Directors.

Termination

When using progressive discipline measures, if prior verbal and written warnings do not achieve a successful resolution, termination may result. **Termination may be immediate without progressive discipline** for serious offenses such as:

- Any form of child abuse, neglect, or inappropriate physical contact with a child
- Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required by law
- Harassment or workplace violence
- Reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Theft, fraud, or falsification of records or time sheets
- Possession of a weapon on facility property
- Gross insubordination or misconduct
- Serious violation of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy (see Section 9)

7.2 Grievances

Staff and parents or guardians may file grievances with the Executive Director using the grievance form on the www.riversiderascals.org or emailing grievance@riversiderascals.org. If the issue involves the Executive Director, grievance may be submitted directly to the Board of Directors. **Grievances must be filed within 14 days** of the event to allow for timely investigation.

Grievances are submitted to the President of the Board of Directors for review. The President has **30 days to respond**. The purpose of the grievance process is to provide a just and equitable method of resolution without discrimination, coercion, restraint, or retaliation.

Section 8 – Staff Code of Conduct

8.1 Personal Conduct & Appearance

Staff at River Side Rascals are competent individuals energized to plan and carry out age-appropriate activities to enhance the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and educational development of all children in their care. Staff are expected to be **kind, patient, and professional** with genuine love and respect for children.

Staff are expected to:

- Use positive reinforcement techniques to guide children’s behavior
- Supervise, interact with, and always observe the children in their care
- Treat all children equally and fairly — no favoritism or special treatment given to any sole child in the facility
- Offer individualized help with a positive attitude

Staff are encouraged to wear clothing and accessories suitable for working with young children and for interacting with parents, guardians, and the community. Staff are role models for young children — this applies not only at work, but also while in the community, where those connected to River Side Rascals or those considering enrolling their children may be present.

8.2 Attendance Policy

Regular, reliable attendance is essential to the safe and effective operation of River Side Rascals.

Children, families, and fellow staff depend on every team member to be present and on time.

Reporting an Absence or Tardiness

- Staff must notify the Executive Director as early as possible — **no later than one (1) hour before** their scheduled shift start — if they will be absent or late
- Notification must be made directly to the Executive Director by **phone or text**. Leaving a message with another staff member is not sufficient unless the Executive Director is unreachable
- Failure to provide timely notice of an absence will be documented and may result in disciplinary action

Unacceptable Attendance Patterns

The following patterns are subject to progressive discipline:

- Three (3) or more unexcused absences in a rolling **90-day period**
- Repeated tardiness (three or more occurrences in a **30-day period**)
- A pattern of absences surrounding weekends, holidays, or scheduled events
- **No-call/no-show** (failure to appear without notification) — may result in immediate termination

In the event of illness, the staff member must notify the Executive Director as early as possible. A doctor's note may be requested at the discretion of the Executive Director. Habitual attendance issues will be grounds for progressive disciplinary action.

Shift Coverage

Known scheduling conflicts must be addressed with the Executive Director as soon as they are known. Staff are expected to assist in finding shift coverage when possible. The ultimate responsibility for coverage coordination lies with the Executive Director.

8.3 Drugs & Alcohol

No drugs or alcohol are allowed at the facility or on the grounds. Staff suspected of being under the influence will be **sent home immediately**, with a follow-up to determine continued employment eligibility.

8.4 Transportation

Staff are **not** to transport children attending River Side Rascals in their personal vehicles. With advance notice to and permission from parents and guardians, staff may walk children to nearby activities such as the neighborhood park or the city pool. Walking to the city pool requires **additional written permission** obtained yearly each summer.

8.5 Housekeeping

- Staff are responsible for the children, their activities, and their assigned areas and duties
- Staff must assume responsibility for the cleaning, maintenance, and upkeep of all toys, games, and playground equipment
- Staff must be willing to assist with any extra duties assigned as needed to keep the center clean and running smoothly
- Staff are expected to promote the facility professionally and positively at all times

8.6 Telephone & Cell Phone Use

Children must be supervised at all times. Staff's primary responsibility is maintaining a safe environment for the children at River Side Rascals. Staff are **not to be on their personal phones** while children are awake, except in the case of a genuine emergency or for work pertaining to River Side Rascals. An occasional text message reply is acceptable. Excessive use will be addressed with progressive disciplinary measures.

If a staff member needs to step away for a phone call, they must perform a **verbal handoff** with another staff member to ensure the continued safety and supervision of all children before stepping away.

8.7 Social Media Use Policy

Staff members are **strictly prohibited** from accessing or engaging with non-work-related social media platforms during working hours while children are awake. The primary responsibility during these times is the supervision and safety of children in our care. Social media use for personal purposes is only permitted when children are napping, and only if the staff member maintains direct supervision and always keeps eyes on the children.

Staff are **not permitted to post pictures or images of children** attending River Side Rascals on their personal social media pages under any circumstances. Photographing children for public use is only allowed with prior written consent from parents and guardians, which grants permission for their child's images to be included on the official River Side Rascals public page.

Staff should be aware that their personal public-facing social media posts reflect River Side Rascals. Any content posted that adversely impacts the reputation of the organization may result in progressive disciplinary action.

8.8 Communication with Parents

It is important to establish **trust** between the parents and guardians of the children attending River Side Rascals. Staff can do this by being highly visible to parents and showing genuine interest in each child while at River Side Rascals.

- Each parent or visitor is to be **greeted and acknowledged** when they walk in
- Staff are to assist parents and guardians in helping children settle in for the day

- Upon end-of-day pickup, staff are to give a **brief summary** of how the child's day went and answer any questions the parent or guardian may have
- If a child obtained an injury while in our care, the Executive Director is to notify the parent or guardian via **Brightwheel** at the time of the incident and verbally communicate with them at pickup

Parents and guardians are to communicate with staff via the **Brightwheel app**. Parents and guardians are expected to notify staff of child absences through this platform.

Only individuals **authorized on the child's pickup list** may take a child from the facility. If there is any doubt about a person's authorization to pick up a child, staff must contact the Executive Director before releasing the child.

8.9 Fundraising & Community Events

As a nonprofit organization, River Side Rascals relies on the generosity and support of individuals, businesses, and community members to continue providing high-quality childcare services. Staff may occasionally be asked to volunteer time outside of business hours to assist with a fundraiser or community event. This is entirely **volunteer-based**, and there will be no repercussions for declining.

8.10 Relationships with Competitors

Relationships with competitors must remain **positive and professional** at all times. If there are concerns involving a competitor, staff should report them to the Executive Director, who will address the situation appropriately.

8.11 Insubordination

Insubordination is defined as the willful refusal to follow a lawful and reasonable directive from a supervisor. In South Dakota, insubordination is recognized as grounds for disciplinary action. Employees are expected to follow their employer's reasonable directions unless doing so would be illegal, impossible, or unreasonable. Repeated or egregious insubordination may result in **immediate termination**.

8.12 Harassment

Harassment occurs when a working environment becomes so hostile as to interfere with a person's ability to perform their job. Once an employer is made aware of a harassment situation, it is their responsibility to take action to correct it. South Dakota law prohibits harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, disability, or national origin.

Any employee who experiences or witnesses' harassment is encouraged to **report it to the Executive Director or Board President immediately**. All reports will be investigated promptly and treated with confidentiality. Retaliation against any employee who reports harassment in good faith is **prohibited** and will result in disciplinary action.

8.13 Whistleblower Protection

No agency, community service provider, facility, or school may retaliate against any staff member who reports in good faith suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child or individual with a developmental disability. An alleged perpetrator may not self-report solely for the purpose of claiming whistleblower protection.

Section 9 – Conflict of Interest Policy

9.1 Purpose

River Side Rascals is committed to operating with **integrity and transparency**. A conflict of interest arises when an employee's personal, financial, or professional interests could — or could reasonably appear to — interfere with their duty to act in the best interest of River Side Rascals, the children in our care, and the families we serve. This policy exists to protect the organization, its staff, and the community it serves.

9.2 Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may exist when a staff member:

- Has a financial interest in a vendor, supplier, or competitor that does business with or competes with River Side Rascals

- Accepts gifts, gratuities, or personal benefits from families, vendors, or other parties related to their employment beyond items of nominal value (generally defined as **\$25 or less**)
- Uses River Side Rascals property, resources, relationships, or confidential information for personal gain or for the benefit of an outside entity
- Engages in outside employment or business activities that directly conflict with their role at River Side Rascals or impair their ability to perform job duties
- Has a close personal or family relationship with another employee that creates an unfair advantage in hiring, scheduling, pay, or discipline
- Makes decisions on behalf of River Side Rascals in matters where they have a direct or indirect personal interest

9.3 Disclosure Requirements

Staff are required to **promptly and fully disclose** any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest to the Executive Director in writing. If the conflict involves the Executive Director, the disclosure must be made directly to the **Board President**. Disclosures should include:

- A description of the nature of the conflict
- The names of any parties involved
- The potential impact on the employee's role or River Side Rascals operations

9.4 Resolution of Conflicts

Upon receiving a disclosure, the Executive Director (or Board President, when applicable) will review the information, determine whether a conflict exists, consult with the Board of Directors as appropriate, and work with the employee to identify and implement an appropriate resolution. This may include recusal from related decisions, termination of conflicting outside interest, or reassignment of duties.

Failure to disclose a known conflict of interest, or continuation of a conflict after being directed to resolve it, is a **serious violation** of this policy and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9.5 Annual Acknowledgment

All staff will be asked to review and acknowledge this Conflict of Interest Policy **annually** as part of their performance review. Staff must disclose any known conflicts at that time or affirm in writing that no conflicts currently exist.

Section 10 – Child Care Policies

10.1 Discipline Philosophy

Physical punishment, humiliation, or any form of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at River Side Rascals without exception. Staff will implement developmentally appropriate strategies to guide behavior, using praise and positive reinforcement to foster cooperation and self-regulation. In cases of persistent behavioral challenges, staff will collaborate with parents to create a plan that addresses the individual needs of the child.

If a staff member brings their own child or children into the facility, the same discipline philosophy must be followed while those children are present.

10.2 Confidentiality

Staff have access to **confidential information** about children attending River Side Rascals, their families, fellow staff, and the operations of the daycare. This information may be obtained through staff meetings, group messaging, app conversations, and other channels. Staff must:

- Access only information necessary to perform their job duties
- Never disclose any information to individuals not employed by River Side Rascals or not directly involved in the child's care
- Share information about a child's health, behavior, or family situation only with relevant parties on a need-to-know basis
- Maintain confidentiality on social media in accordance with Section 8.7

Staff may share or like posts from the official River Side Rascals account.

10.3 Surveillance

Security cameras are in use **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** for the safety and assurance of parents and staff. The Executive Director is the only staff member with access to view video surveillance footage.

10.4 Absentee and Safe Arrival

If a child is not present by 9am and we have not received notification, we will begin our "Safe Arrival" procedure:

- We will call the parent/guardian.
- If unable to reach the parent/guardian, we will contact the emergency contacts.

This policy exists to ensure the child was not forgotten or involved in an incident.

10.5 Mandatory Reporting

All staff of River Side Rascals are **mandated reporters** under South Dakota law. A mandatory reporter is legally required to report any instance in which they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected. Reports must be made to one of the following:

- The state's attorney of the county in which the child resides or is present
- The South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Law enforcement officers

Report Child Abuse or Neglect: 877-244-0864 | Emergency: 911

Staff must read and sign an acknowledgment of South Dakota's mandated reporter law as part of orientation. **Failure to report** suspected abuse or neglect is a violation of state law and grounds for **immediate termination**.

10.6 Fire Safety

All exits and hallways must remain **free from clutter** and items that block full use of the area at all times. All equipment is to be inspected by staff before use for any frayed wires or broken parts. If damaged, staff will not use the equipment and must notify the Executive Director immediately.

River Side Rascals will perform a minimum of **four fire drills annually** with mandatory evacuation. Drills are logged with the date, time, and comments on how the drill went.

10.7 Health & Infection Control

- **Health Monitoring:** Staff must monitor children's health daily for signs of illness and report any concerns to the supervisor. Regarding the health of self or children, please refer to the sick policy located within the parent handbook.
- **Immunizations:** All children attending the daycare must be up to date on their immunizations as per local regulations.
- **Medication:** If a child requires medication, a signed parental permission slip must be on file before any medication is administered, and staff must adhere to all guidelines for administering medication as required by licensing.
- **Accident/Incident Reporting:** Any accident or injury, no matter how minor, must be reported immediately and documented in the incident log. Parents must be notified promptly.

Section 11 – CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)

11.1 Program Overview

River Side Rascals participates in the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, a federally funded program administered through the South Dakota Department of Education. CACFP provides reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks served to eligible children in our care. Participation in CACFP is an important part of River Side Rascals' commitment to child health and wellness, and it helps keep childcare affordable for families.

11.2 Staff Responsibilities

All staff involved in food service, meal supervision, or recordkeeping must understand and follow CACFP requirements. Specific staff responsibilities include:

- **Meal Service:** Ensure that all meals and snacks served meet CACFP meal pattern requirements for the age group being served. Meals must include the required food components in required minimum quantities.
- **Meal Pattern Compliance:** Follow the USDA-approved meal pattern, which includes required components such as milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein/meat alternates, depending on the meal type (breakfast, lunch, snack, supper).

- **No Food Substitutions Without Approval:** Do not substitute meal components without prior approval from the Executive Director. Substitutions for children with medical dietary needs must be supported by a signed physician’s statement on file.
- **Participation Counts:** Accurately record the number of children present and participating in each meal or snack. Counts must be taken at the **point of service** — do not estimate.
- **Attendance Records:** Maintain accurate daily attendance records, as these support CACFP reimbursement claims.

11.3 Recordkeeping Requirements

CACFP requires thorough and accurate recordkeeping. Staff are responsible for completing assigned records honestly and on time, including:

- Daily meal counts by age group at the point of service
- Menus served (actual menus — not planned menus if changes were made)
- Child enrollment forms and income eligibility information (as applicable)
- Any required medical diet statements

Important: Falsification of CACFP records is a serious **federal offense** and is grounds for immediate termination and potential legal action.

11.4 Training

All staff who participate in CACFP-related duties must complete **CACFP training as part of orientation and annually thereafter**. Training covers meal pattern requirements, civil rights compliance, recordkeeping, and program integrity. The Executive Director will coordinate required CACFP training and maintain documentation of training completion.

11.5 Civil Rights Compliance

River Side Rascals is committed to administering the CACFP program in full compliance with **USDA civil rights regulations**. Meals and program benefits must be provided to all enrolled children without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Nondiscrimination posters must be displayed in the facility as required by USDA regulations.

11.6 Program Integrity

Staff must **never** claim reimbursement for meals not served, children not present, or components not included. Any concerns about CACFP compliance or potential fraud must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or directly to the **South Dakota Department of Education** and are protected under the Whistleblower policy.

Section 12 – Workers’ Compensation & Injury Reporting

12.1 Workers’ Compensation Coverage

River Side Rascals maintains **workers’ compensation insurance coverage** as required by South Dakota state law. Workers’ compensation provides benefits to employees who suffer a work-related injury or illness, including coverage for medical treatment and, when applicable, wage replacement during recovery. All employees are covered from their **first day of employment**.

12.2 Reporting a Work-Related Injury or Illness

Prompt reporting is critical. All work-related injuries, illnesses, or accidents — no matter how minor they may seem — must be **reported immediately to the Executive Director on the day they occur**. Delays in reporting may affect the employee’s ability to receive compensation benefits.

Step-by-Step Injury Reporting Procedure

1. **Seek immediate medical attention** if the injury or illness requires it. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911 first.
2. **Notify the Executive Director** as soon as possible on the day the injury or illness occurs. If the Executive Director is unavailable, notify the on-duty supervisor and follow up with the Executive Director as soon as possible.
3. **Complete an Incident Report Form** provided by the Executive Director. The form must be completed fully and accurately, describing what happened, where, when, and how the injury occurred, and listing any witnesses.
4. **Submit the Incident Report** to the Executive Director within **24 hours** of the incident.
5. **Attend required medical evaluations** as directed by River Side Rascals or the workers’ compensation insurance provider. Employees must use authorized medical providers as directed, except in the case of a genuine emergency.

12.3 Near-Miss Reporting

Employees are also encouraged to report **near-miss incidents** — situations that could have caused injury or illness but did not. Near-miss reports help River Side Rascals identify and correct hazards before an injury occurs. Near-miss reports may be submitted verbally or in writing to the Executive Director and will be treated **without blame or disciplinary action**.

12.4 Return to Work

River Side Rascals is committed to supporting injured employees in returning to work as soon as it is medically appropriate. Employees returning from a work-related injury must provide a **physician's release** before resuming duties. If a modified-duty or light-duty assignment is available and medically appropriate, River Side Rascals will make reasonable efforts to provide temporary modified duties during the employee's recovery period.

12.5 Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Reporting all work-related injuries or illnesses immediately
- Cooperating fully with the workers' compensation claims process
- Attending all required medical appointments
- Communicating regularly with the Executive Director regarding their recovery and anticipated return-to-work date
- Providing medical documentation as requested

Failure to report a work-related injury promptly, or providing **false information** in connection with a workers' compensation claim, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, and may affect eligibility for benefits.

Section 13 – Emergency Procedures

All emergencies: The Executive Director will notify the Board President and send continued updates to parents and guardians via the **Brightwheel app** during any emergency situation.

13.1 Missing Child

No child is to be left unattended at any time during their time at the daycare. During transitions, an adult staff member must always leave the room first as the leader, and another staff member will be the last person out of the area to ensure all children have exited.

If a child cannot be located during the day, a **room-to-room search** of the building and grounds must be conducted immediately, and the Executive Director must be notified without delay. If the child is not found during the search, staff must immediately contact:

- Police
- The child's parents or guardians
- The Board President

13.2 Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm

In the event of a **tornado warning or severe thunderstorm**, staff will immediately take all children to an **interior room inside the facility with no visible windows**. The Executive Director will notify the Board President and send continued updates to parents via the Brightwheel app.

13.3 Fire

In the event of a fire, all children will be **evacuated through the nearest exit** to a preset location off of daycare property. Staff will take attendance to ensure all children have been evacuated. If a parent is present, they may not take their child until the child is accounted for in attendance after the evacuation.

During extreme weather, children will be escorted by staff to a **neighboring facility or house**. The Executive Director will notify the Board President and send continued updates to parents via the Brightwheel app.

13.4 Power Outage

Reviewed: 06/2026

Revised: 06/2026

Effective: 06/2026

In accordance with South Dakota state law, in the event of a power outage, the daycare must close if the outage persists longer than **two hours**. In extreme weather conditions, the building must maintain a temperature of at least **68°F** and must not exceed **80°F**. The Executive Director will notify the Board President and send continued updates to parents via the Brightwheel app.

13.5 Public Threat

If there is a public threat or endangerment outside of the facility while the daycare is in operation, staff will immediately perform a **lockdown procedure**. All doors will remain locked and will not be opened until the threat is **fully cleared**. Parents will be asked to refrain from coming to pick up their children until the all-clear is given. The Executive Director will notify the Board President and send continued updates to parents via the Brightwheel app.

Section 14 – Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook

Employee Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the policies outlined in the **River Side Rascals Staff Handbook**, the **River Side Rascals Parent Handbook**, and the **Department of Social Services Rules and Regulations**. I agree to conform to these rules and regulations, and I understand that the handbooks are intended as guides to human resources policies and procedures.

I further understand that River Side Rascals reserves the right to modify policies at any time, and that it is my responsibility to stay informed of any updates communicated by the Executive Director or Board of Directors.

Employee Printed Name _____

Employee Signature _____ **Date** _____

Executive Director Signature _____ **Date** _____