



Out of School Care

**Out of School Care
Parent Handbook -Policies Manual
Northern Lights Public Schools
Revised May 2025**

Introduction

Northern Lights Public Schools is proud to offer Out of School Care Programs to support families who require child care outside of regular school hours. To participate in this program, children must be enrolled in Kindergarten or a higher grade.

The Out of School Care Program is designed to provide high-quality, reliable child care for families in our communities. Care is available during the school year and may include before-school care, after-school care, and care on non-school days. Depending on staffing and demand, care may also be available during school breaks such as Christmas and Spring Break.

The policies and guidelines outlined in this manual are intended to ensure that every child's experience in the program is safe, enriching, and positive. All parents and guardians are required to read and understand these policies and confirm their agreement by signing the designated section of the registration form.

We welcome open communication and encourage parents to reach out to the Division Coordinator with any questions, concerns, or feedback regarding the program or their child's well-being.

Registration Information

Details for registration can be found at www.nlpsab.ca. Before attending the Out of School Care program, parents must review the Parent Handbook and complete an online registration form for each child. A new registration form is required at the start of every school year. Incomplete registration forms will not be accepted.

Registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. To secure a spot for your child, you must complete the online registration form and submit the required deposit through School Cash Online.

Fees and Payments

The Out of School Care program operates on a non-profit basis. User fees support program salaries, supplies, and administrative costs. Fees are subject to change; please refer to the attached flyer for the current fee structure specific to your school. All payments must be made through School Cash Online. Visit www.nlpsab.ca for the payment link.

Parents are reminded that all payments must be made **prior** to the child starting the program. Receipts for income tax purposes are available through your School Cash Online account.

Important Note to Parents:

The Government of Alberta offers a child care subsidy program that may cover part or all of your Out of School Care fees. Eligibility depends on various factors, and parents are responsible for paying any portion not covered by the subsidy. Subsidy approvals and funding amounts may be adjusted, and parents are responsible for covering any discrepancies. Subsidy application forms and an eligibility estimator tool are available at www.child.gov.ab.ca/childcaresubsidy.

Payment Requirements Upon Registration:

- **All users** must pay the deposit (first and last month's fees) upfront (monthly fees plus administrative & School Cash fees).
 - **Subsidized Users:** With approved funding, must pay the deposit (with subsidy) before attending. Parent portions must be paid before the first day of each month.
Note: Subsidy payments are based on actual hours used. The deposit will be held to cover any outstanding balances and refunded after your child's last day of care, once subsidy payments are received.
Please be aware subsidy processing can be delayed by approximately four months, so refunds may take this long to be issued.
-

Withdrawal from Full-Time Care

The Out of School Care program requires **one month's written notice** to withdraw from Full-Time Care (AM/PM). Notice must be given by the first day of the month to withdraw for the following month (i.e., 30 days' notice).

- If you register and pay your deposit in June (or later) for the upcoming school year, you may withdraw **before August 1st** and receive a full refund of your deposit, minus a \$50 administrative fee and School Cash Online fees.
- Withdrawals made **on or after August 1st** will only be refunded the last month's fee deposit, minus administrative and School Cash Online fees, provided one month's written notice is given.

- After the program receives one month's notice and there are no outstanding fees, you will be entitled to your deposit or last month's fees refund (less School Cash Online fees).

You may withdraw at any time during the school year by providing **one month's written notice as described above**.

Procedure for Attending Out of School Care

Once you have submitted the registration form and completed payment through School Cash Online, your registration will be processed. Your child may begin attending the program once the Site Supervisor contacts you with the necessary details.

For after-school care, when the last bell rings, children will gather their personal belongings and proceed directly from their classroom to the designated Out of School Care area. If a child arrives without prior arrangements, staff will contact the parents to request immediate pickup. The child will be supervised in the office until they are collected.

Please note, all payments must be made **prior** to your child starting the program.

Failure to Notify of Absence

If a full-time user is absent on a scheduled day, parents must notify the program. Failure to do so will result in a \$30.00 fine. Repeated failure to notify may result in the withdrawal of services.

This policy is in place to ensure the safety of your child. If we are expecting your child and have not been informed of their absence, we remain responsible for their safety. Miscommunications can occur, and a child may accidentally board a bus when they are supposed to attend Out of School Care. We strive to maintain the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

Late Payment of User Fees

To address increasing late payments, an automatic late fee of \$30.00 will be added to your monthly fees if payment is not received by the first day of the month. All fees must be paid through School Cash Online.

If late payments continue, parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the program. This policy applies to both regular and subsidized monthly users.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Parents arriving after the program's closing time will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 (plus School Cash Online fees) for each 10-minute period—or portion thereof—per child for the first through third offenses. For subsequent offenses, the late fee will increase to \$20.00 (plus School Cash Online fees) for each 10-minute period—or portion thereof.

All late fees must be paid via School Cash Online before the child can return to the program. Repeated late pick-ups may result in the withdrawal of services.

Release of Children

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, arrival and departure times will be recorded on a Sign-In and Sign-Out form. Parents or authorized guardians are responsible for signing their child(ren) out of the program. Staff cannot release children unless the parent or designated person comes into the building.

We kindly ask that those picking up children come to the school entrance to allow staff to communicate directly with the person collecting the child, as this is an important time for connection and communication. Children will **not** be released to a parent waiting in a vehicle or anyone who does not come to the building—no exceptions.

Children will only be released to the parent, guardian, or an authorized individual listed on the registration form. If the person is unfamiliar to staff, photo identification will be required before the child is released.

Staffing

Out of School Care staff are hired in accordance with Northern Lights Public Schools' child care standards. All staff members are required to complete a Criminal Record Check and hold a valid First Aid Certificate. When teenage assistants are involved, they are supervised at all times and do not work alone with children; their role is to support planned activities such as crafts, games, or sports.

When seven or more children attend the program, a minimum of two supervisory staff members will be present. If attendance reaches 25 or more children, a third staff member will be on duty. The program provides a variety of age-appropriate activities, including arts and crafts, sports, reading, toys, and games.

Facility

The indoor play area is maintained to be clean, well-organized, and in good repair, designed to meet the needs and interests of the children. The outdoor play space is safe, secure, and offers a range of healthy activity options.

Each program has designated spaces for administration and for children's personal belongings. Access to washroom facilities and a telephone is also provided at every site.

Equipment

All equipment will be age-appropriate and meet the developmental needs of the children enrolled. Equipment will be maintained in good repair, safe, clean, and stimulating to encourage meaningful participation by children. Equipment will promote the development of fine and gross motor skills, social-emotional skills, cognitive abilities, and creativity. Materials will be accessible to children, organized to support small group engagement, and offer quiet spaces for solitary activities.

Health and Emergency Procedures

A fully stocked first aid kit will be on site at all times and will accompany staff and children during transitions to outdoor or off-site locations, along with the children's registration forms.

The program will close in the event of a threat to health and/or safety, including but not limited to: fire, plumbing or heating failure, epidemics, flooding, extreme weather, or other emergencies. During winter, if bus and/or school classes are canceled due to blizzards or severe wind chills—as per Northern Lights Public Schools (NLPS) policy—the program may also close. Full-time families will be informed of any such closures.

Emergency Evacuations and Fire Procedures

Supervisors will be well-versed in the school's emergency and fire evacuation procedures. Evacuation plans will be visibly posted in each classroom or designated program area.

Fire drills will be conducted regularly. During a drill:

- Children will line up calmly.
 - Staff 1 will inspect the room, ensuring no children remain, and will close windows and doors.
 - Staff 2 will take attendance sheets, registration forms, and first aid supplies, conduct a head count, and lead the group to the designated safe location.
 - Once outside, Staff 2 will perform attendance again.
 - Re-entry will occur only after the area is confirmed safe.
 - If re-entry is not possible, parents will be contacted to arrange pick-up.
-

Clothing

Children must wear indoor shoes to attend the program. Weather-appropriate clothing is essential for comfort, safety, and health. Outdoor play is scheduled year-round, weather permitting. Children will go outside when temperatures are warmer than -25°C, although outdoor time may be shortened in extreme cold.

Meals and Snacks

Parents must provide all meals and snacks. Healthy choices, aligned with Canada's Food Guide, are strongly encouraged, including nutritious beverages such as milk, 100% juice, or water. Unhealthy food or drink may be returned to parents at pick-up.

Food items containing nuts, peanuts, or fish may be restricted. Please refer to your child's school policy for specific guidance.

Application of Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Children should arrive with sunscreen applied. A labeled bottle may be left at the center for reapplication. Staff cannot apply sunscreen or insect repellent without written parental consent.

Medication

Staff will not administer medication, except in emergencies (e.g., EpiPen or asthma inhalers). Parents must provide detailed written instructions and complete the

necessary consent forms. Emergency medication and instructions will be stored securely with the first aid kit, out of children's reach.

Illness

Children must be healthy to attend, participate in outdoor and active play, and not exhibit symptoms that may indicate illness.

Per Alberta regulations, children should stay home if they:

- Have a fever
- Have a severe or persistent cough
- Are overly congested
- Appear unusually tired or unwell
- Exhibit diarrhea or vomiting
- Show signs of a communicable disease

If a child becomes ill while at the program, they will be isolated, supervised, and parents will be contacted for immediate pick-up. Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning, or provide a doctor's note.

COVID-19 protocols will be followed per guidance from Alberta Health Services and the Chief Medical Officer. Parents are asked to keep children home if they exhibit any flu or cold symptoms.

Accidents and Emergencies

While all precautions are taken to ensure safety, accidents may occur. First aid will be administered as needed. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified. If immediate medical care is required, staff will call an ambulance and accompany the child if necessary. Parents are responsible for ambulance costs. An accident report will be completed and signed by a parent.

Communicable Disease

Children suspected of having a communicable disease will be supervised in isolation until a parent arrives for immediate pick-up. Staff will notify the Health Unit and follow public health protocols.

Lice

If lice are suspected, a staff member will perform a check. If lice or nits are present, parents must pick up the child immediately and administer treatment the same day. The child may return only once no lice or nits are found. Affected families will receive information from the Health Authority. All toys and equipment will be cleaned per recommended protocols.

Out of School Care Transition Procedures

Arrival Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will receive additional supervision when transitioning from class to the program. Older students will also be warmly welcomed and checked in to assess their well-being and needs.

Changing Activities Staff will encourage clean-up before transitioning to new activities.

Changing Rooms To ease transitions between locations, staff will implement structured transition strategies, such as grouping by grade or timing the group to maintain engagement and reduce delays.

Snack Time Snack time is a valuable social period for building relationships. A "free-flow" model allows children to choose when to eat within a time window, preserving play time and supporting self-regulation.

Departure Attendance is recorded during departure, and children are only released to authorized adults. Bussing children will be escorted by staff. This is also a key opportunity for communication between staff and parents. For in-depth conversations, a scheduled meeting is preferred.

Child Guidance

Children are entitled to a respectful, supportive environment. Staff will establish clear and consistent behavior expectations. Activities and staff conduct are designed to encourage positive behavior. Strategies include:

- Verbal reminders of expectations
- Offering alternative choices
- Assisting with problem-solving
- Limiting use of specific materials if needed

- Short time-away periods if behavior is disruptive

Staff will nurture friendship skills and respect, promoting responsibility, independence, emotional regulation, and cooperation.

Ongoing behavioral issues will involve parents and, if necessary, a behavior plan developed in consultation with the Division Coordinator. Continued disruptive behavior may require the family to seek alternate care.

Child Assistant Requirements

Children requiring an educational assistant during school hours due to physical, developmental, or behavioral needs must also have appropriate support while attending OSC. The program may be able to assist. Please speak with the Site Supervisor for more information.

Grievance Procedure

Parents are encouraged to bring concerns directly to the child's caregiver or Site Supervisor. If unresolved or requiring urgent attention, they should contact the Division Coordinator.

The Coordinator will gather information and determine an appropriate course of action. Parents will be informed of the outcome within confidentiality guidelines.

All final decisions that vary from this handbook will be made at the discretion of Northern Lights Public Schools (NLPS).