

MINNETONKA
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION



Parent Handbook

This handbook includes important contact information, terms and conditions for enrollment and program policies for parents and guardians.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Explorers Office

Minnetonka Community Education Center
4584 Vine Hill Road
Excelsior, MN 55331

Fax: 952-401-6805

Website: www.minnetonkacommunityed.org/explorers

Main Office Staff

Jenny Bodurka, Coordinator for Youth and Adult Programs	952-401-6818
Molly Bahneman, Program Manager	952-401-6824
Becca Mills, Program Specialist	952-401-4159
Mary Hall, Billing and Enrollment	952-401-6838

Explorers Locations

Clear Springs Elementary School	952-401-6975
Deephaven Elementary School	952-401-6917
Excelsior Elementary School	952-401-5631
Groveland Elementary School	952-401-5582
Minnetonka Community Education Center	952-401-6825
Minnewashta Elementary School	952-401-5481
Scenic Heights Elementary School	952-401-5464

Welcome!

We are excited you have chosen District 276. Explorers offers school aged childcare for children in grades K-5 and Junior Explorers offers preschool childcare for children ages 3 - 5. Explorers is offered before and after school and on non-school days. Juniors offers all day care from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

During the summer childcare is offered for children 4 years old through incoming 5th grade.

MINNETONKA SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION AND GOALS

Mission Statement

The mission of the Minnetonka School District, a community that transcends traditional definitions of excellence and where dreams set sail, is to ensure all students envision and pursue their highest aspirations while serving the greater good, through learning and teaching which:

- Value and nurture each person.
- Inspire in everyone a passion to excel with confidence and hope.
- Instill expectations that stimulate extraordinary achievement in the classroom and in life.

Our Objectives

- All students will meet or exceed district academic standards.
- All students will achieve according to their individual potential.
- All students will continually achieve their stated aspirations.
- All students will possess an enlightened view of themselves, others and the world.

Our Beliefs

We believe that:

- An educated populace is integral to a democratic society.
- Families have the primary responsibility to ensure the education of their children.
- All adults are responsible for the care and welfare of all children.
- All people deserve the opportunity to pursue their individual potential.
- A person's attitude is the most significant determinant of success.
- Personal fulfillment comes from pursuing one's passion.
- Each person has fundamental, intrinsic worth.
- The dignity of each person is sacred.
- All people need to love and be loved.
- All people have a right to live and work in a safe environment.
- The uniqueness of each individual enriches the community.
- All people have the right to express matters of conscience.
- Effective communication is essential to building relationships and strengthening mutual commitment to purpose.
- Integrity is essential to a meaningful relationship.

MINNETONKA EXPLORERS PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement

Explorers provides professional childcare preschool through elementary age. We support parents and help their children develop to their full potential socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

Our Objectives

- Create a safe environment where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, cultivate friendships, and grow in confidence, independence and respect for themselves and others.
- Provide opportunity for children to build positive and enriching relationships with trusted adults.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for children to learn and explore through play.

BILLING AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment is open to all children in Minnetonka elementary schools grades K - 5 and Junior Explorers age 3 (by September 1) to age 5.

Summer Explorers is open children age 4 (by June 1) through fifth grade (fall entering grade).

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. During the school year, minimum enrollment is 3 days per week (days cannot be changed from week to week). During the summer program, minimum enrollment is 10 days throughout the summer.

A child is enrolled in the program when:

- Online registration is complete, including payment of the registration fee. You will be contacted by email with the approval of your registration contract and the confirmation of your start date.
- All prior District and Community Education accounts are paid in full.
- A child is registered for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks (school year) or 10 total days (summer).

Permanent Change in Schedule

Changes to your schedule can be done online. Schedule changes will be accommodated on a space available basis. An email will be sent to you to confirm that your request has been received. A second email will be sent to you when your request has been approved.

School Year Program Schedule Changes:

All schedule changes will take effect after ten business days. Schedule changes made with less than ten business days' notice will not be approved. There is a \$10 charge for any change to your child's schedule.

A ten-business day notice is required when withdrawing from Explorers. Withdrawal requests can be made online at www.minnetonka.ce.eleyo.com.

Summer Program:

Families will have the opportunity to make schedule changes to their summer enrollment as follows:

- All June schedule change are required to be made by May 25, 2021
- All July schedule changes are required to be made by June 22, 2021
- All August schedule changes are required to be made by July 20, 2021

Changes will be approved on a space available basis and are subject to our standard change fee of \$10 per request. Please note that your registration fee is non-refundable should you choose to remove your summer contract.

Add-a-Day (School Year Only)

Currently enrolled children have the option of attending Explorers on days on which they are not currently enrolled. Care is available on a space available basis, and requests must be received at least 24 hours in advance. Please call your child's site with your request. Add-a-Day rates apply. Add-a-days are not available in the summer program.

Vacations

School Aged Explorers: If your child will be not attending Explorers for any reason, please contact your Site Supervisor to let them know which days your child will be absent so they do not conduct child searches (\$10 child search fee). If a student will be on vacation for 5 or more days, please contact Billing and Enrollment to withdraw your child's contract with a 10-business day notice. If you'd like to re-enroll your child, there is a \$25 fee and re-enrollment is on a space available basis.

Junior Explorers: A \$75 holding fee per week for student vacations will be approved with a 10-business day notice, with a maximum of 2 weeks' vacation during the school year.

Billing & Payment Policy

Fees are charged based on the days and program components you are registered for, not on attendance (*See prolonged illness* for exceptions). You will not receive credit for late arrival or early pick-up, nor when children leave Explorers to participate in other activities.

After each month of service, an email will be sent indicating that invoices are ready to be viewed online. The monthly fees will be charged to the credit card or checking/savings account we have on file.

Your credit card/account will be charged on the 15th of each month. A \$15 fee will be added to your account if your credit card is declined for any reason. Please notify the Explorers office of new account numbers *before* your card expires, or of any changes in your account. Past due accounts will be sent to collections and may incur legal fees.

Year-end tax statements can be accessed online. Our Federal Tax Identification number is **41-6001402**. This is the number you need to complete your childcare expense forms.

If you are enrolled with your employer in a Flex Benefit Plan, forms will be signed only after payment has been received. Please contact Mary Hall at 952-401-6838 or mary.hall@minnetonkaschools.org if you have any questions.

Explorers does not offer scholarships. Financial assistance may be available to qualifying families through the county in which you live. Please contact Mary Hall for more information.

If you have a question regarding your Explorers account, contact Billing and Enrollment:

School Aged Care, Non-School Days and Key Cards Contact
Rebecca Mills at 952-401-6841 or rebecca.mills@minnetonkaschools.org

Juniors Explorers Contact
Mary Hall at 952-401-6838 or mary.hall@minnetonkaschools.org

Data Privacy

Records concerning your child, including enrollment forms, health records, observation records and all other information about your child are confidential and will only be accessible to you, billing and enrollment staff, the Program Manager, the Site Supervisor and your child's teachers and/or a person designated by the school or state to review our records for licensing purposes.

We must have a file for every child enrolled in Explorers and an Explorers Contract, through our Eleyo registration system. It is important that all information on file, especially phone numbers, be kept current. Please inform the Site Supervisor of any changes. We print the Child Information Sheet and have that on file at the site.

PROGRAM HOURS AND OPERATION

School Year Program:

Runs before school: 6:30 am - school start time and after school release time - 6:00 pm. Monday-Friday. We begin offering care the first day of school and concluding the last day of school. Your registration includes only days school is

in session.

Non-school Days:

Offered on most school release days from 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. These days offer a variety of activities. These days are not a part of your before and after school contract, there is a separate registration for non-school days. Your registration for non-school days must be approved in order to attend.

Early Releases and Late Starts

These days are not a part of your contract, there is a separate registration for Early Release or Late Start. Your registration for these days must be approved to attend.

Summer:

Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. The summer program begins a few days after the school year program ends and concludes one week prior to the start of the next school year.

Holidays:

Fees are not charged on days Explorers is scheduled to be closed.

Drop off & Pick Up

You will receive 4 color-coded sheets of paper with your child's name on them on the first day of programming. This color-coding is based on your child's grade group. Please place one of these in your front window on the passenger side of your vehicle and distribute the others to individuals authorized to drop off and pick up your child(ren). Adults dropping off and picking up are required to wear a mask when interacting with staff. We will check ID for any adult we have not interacted with before or do not recognize.

Drop off

- Pull up to the front of the school between 6:30 a.m. and the school start time and a Site Supervisor will come out to meet you at your car.
- Supervisor will take student's temperature at the car and check the student in using the iPad.
- If a student cannot unbuckle themselves from their car seat, the parent will assist in getting the student out of the car.
- Site Supervisor will walkie to a staff person to take the student to their program space.
- Students will wait outside of the main entrance until a staff member is ready to walk them inside.

Pick up

- Pull up to the front of the school and be sure that your place placard in the front window. The Site Supervisor will walk up to the car and verbally confirm which student the adult is there to pick up. If they have not met the person picking up the student, they will ask the adult to show their ID.

- The Site Supervisor will walkie for the student to be brought out and will relay any messages or paperwork that needs to be passed over to the authorized person picking up the student.
- The Supervisor will watch until the student is safely in the car, the authorized person picking up the student will need to assist a student that requires help with a car seat.

Late Pick Up

Explorers closes at 6:00 p.m. All children must be picked up no later than 6:00 p.m. according to the time on the iPad. If an emergency delays you and you are going to be late picking up your child, make plans for someone you have designated as an Authorized Pick Up person to pick up your child on time, and call the program staff immediately.

In the event that your child is still at the program after closing and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps (in order):

1. Attempt to reach you on your home, work or cell phone number.
2. Call the people you listed as authorized to pick up your child.
3. If you are more than 30 minutes late, the police will be contacted for assistance.

A late fee of \$10 is charged for each 5 minutes (or portion thereof) that parents are late picking up a child.

6:01 p.m. to 6:05 p.m.	\$10	6:16 p.m. to 6:20 p.m.	\$40
6:06 p.m. to 6:10 p.m.	\$20	6:21 p.m. to 6:25 p.m.	\$50
6:11 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.	\$30	6:26 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	\$60

After the third instance of late pick up, childcare services may be suspended or terminated.

Absences – School Year Only

We take our responsibility to care for your child very seriously. If you do not notify us of your child’s absence and staff spends time trying to find your child, a \$10 child search fee will be assessed. Daily fees apply, even if absent (see *Enhanced Illness policy* for exceptions).

If a child does not arrive at Explorers as intended, the Site Supervisor will:

1. Contact the school to see if the child was in attendance.
2. Contact the parents.
3. If the parents cannot be reached, persons listed as Authorized Pick Ups or Emergency Contacts will be called.
4. If no one knows the whereabouts of the child, the authorities will be called.

If your child will not be attending the program because of a scheduled appointment, or other planned absence, please call your site number below and leave a message. If your child is ill, when you call the school to report the illness

or pick up your child from school, also call Explorers before his/her normal arrival time to avoid the \$10 child search fee.

Clear Springs	952-401-6975
Deephaven	952-401-6917
Excelsior	952-401-5631
Groveland	952-401-5582
MCEC	952-401-6825
Minnewashta	952-401-5481
Scenic Heights	952-401-5464

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will be taking temperatures at the onset of each day for both students and staff. We are operating under the parameters that we want to work to keep each other healthy and that we have an obligation to each other to stay home when we are sick.

Enhanced Illness Policy

We will be following the guidance of MDH and implementing the [Exclusion Guidelines](#) in partnership with each school building.

If your child will be out of school for an extended period of time; please notify Explorers Billing and Enrollment as soon as possible (952-401-6838) to request an adjustment to your monthly Explorers invoicing. Explorers continues to staff all pods and sites. Therefore, if your child is absent from the program due to illness or quarantine, we require payment as follows:

- 1 through 4 consecutive days missed from Explorers - parents will be financially responsible for 100% of the daily fees
- If 5 or more consecutive days are missed from Explorers:
 - Days 1 through 4 parents will be 100% financially responsible
 - Day 5 and beyond parents will be financially responsible for 50% of the daily fees

Face Coverings

Children and staff in our school aged care program (K- 5) are required to wear masks during their time at Explorers.

Children in our Junior Explorers program are not required to wear face coverings, but are encouraged to wear a face covering if they can do so reliably in compliance with CDC guidance (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the mask).

Types of face coverings may include a paper or disposable mask, a cloth mask, a neck gaiter, a scarf, a bandanna or a religious face covering. The face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear. Alternatives to masks

such as clear face shields may be considered for those with health conditions or situations where wearing a mask is problematic.

Some logistical items:

- You will be required to provide face masks for your child(ren)
- Backup masks will be needed as replacements should the mask they are wearing become damaged, soiled and/or wet.
 - Your child should have 1-2 backup masks available at Explorers each day
 - Masks should be washed daily after each use
- Your child should be wearing their mask when they arrive at Explorers.
- Your child will be responsible for all their face mask management (including taking it on and off). Staff cannot physically assist children with their masks but will provide verbal guidance and modeling.
- Masks are an aid and not a replacement for proper social/physical distancing. Please help your child(ren) understand the importance of keeping space between friends.
- Face coverings can be removed temporarily for the following reasons:
 - While eating or drinking
 - When outside if social distancing is maintained
 - During physical activity, such as gym games.

Maintaining a Safe Environment

Based on enrollment students will be placed into bubbles with a maximum of 15 students with 1 adult. Large group area (gyms cafeteria) may have more than one group of as long as social distancing can be maintained.

We will provide appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (such as soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, tissues).

We will discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. If equipment must be shared, we will clean and disinfect between each use. We will ask students to avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids. Students will be told not to share food or beverages. Each student must bring their own water bottle. Water-filling stations are available.

We will build routines of hand hygiene into the daily school schedule for all students and staff, including handwashing and sanitation breaks during or between classroom activities. We will reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older students.

We will reinforce hand washing during key times, such as:

- arrival and dismissal
- before, during, and after preparing or eating food

- after using the bathroom
- after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- after touching objects with bare hands that have been handled by other people

Medication

A written order signed by the licensed medication prescriber and the parent/guardian is required for all prescription medications. Such orders must be renewed annually or whenever medication dosage or administration changes. A signed district [Medication Permission Form](#) along with the medication in the original prescription container must be turned in to staff.

Prescription medication must come to school in the original container, marked with the student's name, and must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label.

All medication administered, will be documented. This includes the name and dose of medication, time of administration, and the name of the individual who administered the medication. Medications are stored in our medicine lock box.

Accidents

If a child has an accident the staff person working with the child will notify the parent with an accident report. If a serious accident occurs which might need medical attention, the staff will contact you immediately so you can take your child to the doctor or dentist.

In an emergency where immediate attention is needed, the staff will call 911 and then immediately contact you. After 911 has been called, it is up to the paramedics to decide what to do. If they decide your child needs emergency treatment, they will take the child to the nearest emergency medical facility, you will be responsible for medical charges. We will stay on the phone with you to help make the decision whether to transport the child or not.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, parents must bring your child's Allergy Action Plan to the site on their first day of care. A [Medical Release Form](#) will need to be filled out for any necessary medication administered.

Student Conduct

Explorers recognizes that individual responsibility and mutual respect are essential components of a successful childcare experience. All students are entitled to learn and grow in a setting that promotes respect of self, others, and property. Proper student conduct is necessary to ensure the safety and respect of all students and to create an atmosphere where students can relax, explore individual interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence.

The Minnetonka Schools Student Discipline and Code of Conduct policy is in effect and pertains to all children in Explorers (see <https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/uploaded/Documents/Policy/506.pdf> for full policy). In the event a child has received an out of school suspension, they are not able to attend Explorers until the suspension period is over.

Unacceptable behavior is subject to disciplinary action. The decision of the type of consequence in a particular case is at the discretion of the staff.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Student conference with Explorers staff.
- Parent contact or conference.
- Loss of student privileges, including participation in field trips or special events.
- Referral to support services or community resources.
- Suspension or dismissal from Explorers.
- Other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate.

The following behaviors are considered bottom line behaviors and may result in a child being sent home immediately from Explorers. Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior additional consequences including, but not limited to, suspension/termination from the program may occur:

- Abusive or inappropriate language/profanity
- Defiance/disrespect/insubordination/non-compliance
- Leaving building/school grounds
- Harassment/bullying
- Fighting/hitting/kicking/choking
- Weapons
- Property damage/vandalism
- Theft

Termination of Care by the Program

If Explorers leadership determines that our program is not meeting the needs of a child, we reserve the right to terminate the care arrangement on a timeline that is in the child's best interest. Other reasons that may result in the termination of a specific care arrangement are as follows:

- Non-payment for child care services and/or lack of adherence to the fee payment policies.
- Lack of cooperation from parent(s) with the program efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings.
- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threat by parent(s) toward program staff or other parent(s).
- Repeated late pick up.
- Failure to comply with Explorers terms and conditions.
- When a child's developmental, medical, or behavioral needs require personnel, training, or equipment that Explorers is unable to provide,

program staff and parents will meet to discuss the best course of action, appropriate resources, and options for care.

ABOUT EXPLORERS

Staff

Supervisory staff are experienced professionals with degrees in child development, education, or recreation. All staff are involved in on-going professional development training. Background checks, first aid, CPR, concussion training and blood borne pathogen training are also required of staff. The target adult to child ratio is 1:10 for Junior Explorers and 1:15 for grade K-5.

Student Supervision

Children are always supervised by staff. As a site team, staff work together to know the whereabouts of all the children. Each site has implemented a tracking system to ensure all children are accounted for in the different choice areas.

Mandated Reporting

Staff are legally required to report an instance of observed or suspected child abuse or neglect. That includes a parent who appears to be intoxicated when picking up a child at Explorers.

Additional Student Support

When parents indicate that their child has an IEP or IFSP during the registration process, our Program Manager will request further information regarding student's needs in a child care setting. Concerns about a student's needs should be directed to the Program Manager or Site Supervisor right away.

Communication

At Explorers, we value open communication with parents and encourage you to be involved. A survey will be conducted annually to gather feedback on the program. Results received will help to make improvements to our program.

Each Explorers site will publish a monthly newsletter so that parents are informed of weekly themes, special events, and daily activities. Monthly newsletters will be sent via email. All site communications will be posted on the Explorers website at www.minnetonkacommunityed.org/explorers

If you have questions or wish to talk to someone about your child, do not hesitate to call the Site Supervisor. Special conferences can be scheduled at any time staff or parents feel there is a need.

The staff will make every attempt to notify parents via phone or by written note whenever a situation arises that we feel you should be aware of. We request that parents keep the staff informed of your needs, concerns and feelings.

If an injury occurs at Explorers, parents will be notified. Minor scrapes and bruises handled at Explorers and which need no further attention will be reported to you on a form called Minor Mishaps and given to you when you pick up your child(ren).

We welcome suggestions and comments to improve the quality of care for your child. Please contact your Site Supervisor if you have a comment or concern. If additional communication is necessary, please contact Molly Bahneman, Program Manager, at 952-401-6824. If the problem is still not resolved, contact Jenny Bodurka, Youth & Adult Programs Coordinator, at 952-401-6818.

Outdoor Play

In the summer, children are required to wear sunscreen. A sunscreen permission slip must be signed. In extreme heat, appropriate precautions will be taken to limit the activities of children. The children will have the choice to spend some time outside every day and should be properly dressed for the weather. We will not play outside on extremely rainy days or if the temperature is 0 degrees or reaches -10 degrees below with the wind-chill. Children must have appropriate outdoor clothing to play outside.

Breakfast, Lunch & Snacks

A breakfast snack is provided for children who arrive at Explorers before 7:30 a.m. An afternoon snack is provided at the beginning of afternoon programming. During the school year all snacks are planned and prepared by Nutrition Services.

Juniors Explorers must bring a bag lunch. On non-school days and in the summer, children must bring a paper bag lunch and a beverage. Families have the option to elect to purchase milk as a lunch beverage for their children during summer programming. There is \$5.00 one-time charge for the entire summer. Breakfast and snack are provided.

Contact with Staff Outside of Explorers

If Explorers staff have any contact with Explorers children outside of Explorers, parents must understand that staff are doing so as an individual, not as a member of Explorers. Minnetonka Public Schools is not responsible for protecting staff liability in such relationships with children. Examples of such activities would be babysitting, housesitting, taking kids to ball games, etc.

INCLEMENT WEATHER – *School Year*

When weather or other emergencies lead to a change in the school schedule, the following practices will be in place:

Unplanned School Closures

Explorers will be open. Students registered for before or after school care on these days can attend. K-5 students will attend at Deephaven Elementary and Jr. Explorers will attend at MCEC.

If school is canceled and your child attends Explorers on these days, you will be charged the non-school day rate. If your child does **not** attend Explorers on these days, you will still be charged the scheduled rate per your contract.

When weather conditions lead to any of the above situations, announcements will be made on radio station WCCO-AM and on TV stations KSTP and KARE 11. Please listen for these announcements when the weather is questionable.

Delayed Start

When the school opening is delayed by an hour or more, Explorers will be open at the regular time (6:30 am). Please call the site to make sure staff have arrived.

Early Dismissal

When weather related emergencies lead to an early school dismissal, Explorers will remain open until parents or guardians have picked up all children. Please make every effort to pick up your child as soon as possible when school is dismissed early due to bad weather.

Transportation

Transportation to and from Explorers will be done by the parents, emergency contact or those designated for Authorized Pick-Up. District 276-contracted bus company will provide field trip transportation. The appropriate emergency vehicle will provide emergency transportation. Children may never be transported by staff in personal vehicles for any reason. This policy is for the protection of each staff person and for reasons of liability.

Pets/Animals in the Program

On occasion, Explorers may have working service dogs at our locations. We also may have presentations from outside organizations involving animals. Families are asked to check with the Site Supervisor and/or staff before bringing any animals into the program. You will be notified in writing if any animals will be present in the program for any reason.

Thank you for choosing Minnetonka Explorers for your child care needs. We look forward to working with you and your child.