



K- 5 Parent Handbook School Year 2025-26

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

Kim Carlson, Executive Director	952-401-5043
Jenny Bodurka, Director	952-401-6818
Brittany Bell, K-5 Program Manager	952-401-6824
Carrie Lescarbeau, Program Manager for Staff Development	952-401-5990
Lindsey Anderson, Program Specialist	952-401-4159
Kris Fasnacht, Billing and Enrollment	952-401-6832
Caterina Cicogna, 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
Minnewashta Elementary School	952-401-5481
Scenic Heights Elementary School	952-401-5464

WELCOME TO EXPLORERS!

We are excited you have chosen Minnetonka Community Education's Explorers childcare. Explorers offers school aged childcare for children in grades K-5. Explorers childcare is offered before and after school and on non-school days. During the summer, childcare is offered for incoming kindergarteners through incoming 5th graders.

MINNETONKA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The mission of the Minnetonka School District is to ensure all students envision and pursue their highest aspirations while serving the greater good. In a community that transcends traditional definitions of excellence, we use learning and teaching as tools to value and nurture each person, inspire in everyone a passion to excel with confidence and hope, and instill expectations that stimulate extraordinary achievement in the classroom and in life.

EXPLORERS CHILDCARE OBJECTIVES

- Offer a safe environment where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence, independence and respect for themselves and others.
- Provide opportunities for children to build positive and enriching relationships with trusted adults.
- Create 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.

Summer Explorers is open to children entering kindergarten to entering fifth grade in the fall of the following school year.

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. During the school year, a minimum enrollment of 2 days per week is required (days cannot be changed from week to week) for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks. During the summer program, a minimum enrollment of 2 consistent days per week is required throughout the summer. Additional days can be added as drop in days if space and staffing allow.

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 Community Education accounts are paid in full.

Permanent Change in Schedule

Schedule changes are requested online at www.minnetonka.ce.eleyo.com. Schedule changes will be accommodated on a space available basis. An email will be sent to confirm that your request has been received. A second email will be sent when your request has been approved.

A ten-business day notice is required when withdrawing from Explorers. Withdrawal requests can be made online at www.minnetonka.ce.eleyo.com. Please note that the registration fee is non-refundable should you choose to remove your contract.

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 each request for change to your child's schedule.

Summer Program Schedule Changes

Families will have the opportunity to make schedule changes to their summer enrollment up until the established deadline. Changes will be approved on a space available basis and are subject to our standard change fee of \$10 per request. No change requests will be accepted after the deadline date.

Add-a-Day

Currently enrolled children have the option of attending Explorers on days for 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 contact our Billing and Enrollment team with your request. Add-a-day rates apply.

Billing & Payment Policy

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

An email will be sent mid-month 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 7 days after the monthly invoice has been generated.

A \$15 fee will be added to your account if your credit card is declined for any reason. Please update your account online or notify the Billing and Enrollment 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 Kris Fasnacht at 952-401-6832 or kristi.fasnacht@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 Kris Fasnacht for more information.

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, Explorers staff supporting the care of your child and your child's teachers and/or a person designated by the school or state to review our records for certification purposes.

We must have an Explorers childcare contract, through our Eleyo registration system for every program participant. It is important that all information on file, especially phone numbers and authorized pick ups, be kept current. Please regularly review your Eleyo account to keep information accurate.

PROGRAM HOURS AND OPERATION**School Year Program:**

Before school hours: 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 conclude on the last day of school. Your childcare contract includes only days when school is in session.

Non-school Days

Offered on most non-school days from 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. These days offer a variety of activities and field trips (when permitted). 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. [Here](#) you will find the 25-26 Non-School Day Registration Information.

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 Program:

Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. The summer program dates will be communicated in January of each year.

Holidays:

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

Unplanned School Closure:

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

Unplanned School Closures: On school closure days, the Superintendent will determine if Explorers childcare is open or closed.

Should Explorers remain open, students registered for before or after school care on these days can attend. K-5 students will attend at Deeplaven Elementary. Students should bring lunch from home.

If school is cancelled 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 a.m.). You must be registered to attend morning Explorers on the day school is delayed to utilize services.

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. You must be registered to attend after school Explorers on the day school is delayed to utilize services.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

Sign in and sign out

All children must be signed in on an iPad upon arrival and signed out on an iPad upon departure.

Release of Children

Your child will be released only to people listed as authorized pick-ups. Staff is required to ask for identification from anyone unfamiliar attempting to pick up a child. If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up your child, you will be contacted. If you cannot be reached, your child will be held until you or your emergency contact person arrives. If you want to authorize additional adults to pick up your child please update your child's profile in Eleyo.

Copies of legal documents regarding child custody must be provided to the program office before any staff person can actively prevent non-custodial parents from picking up their child.

Late Pick-Up Policy

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 our attendance 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 pickup 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 pickups for 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.

- 1 - 5 minutes late - \$10
- 6 - 10 minutes late - \$20
- 11 - 15 minutes late - \$30
- 16 - 20 minutes late pm - \$40
- 21 - 25 minutes late pm - \$50
- 26- 30 minutes late - \$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 *Prolonged Illness* for exceptions).

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

1. Contact parents.
2. Contact the school to see if the child was in attendance.
3. If the parents cannot be reached, persons listed as authorized pickups and/or emergency contacts will be called.
4. If we can not ascertain 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
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Minnewashta	952-401-5481
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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Medication

In accordance with state regulations, the Explorers program must maintain its own supply of medication for students who may need it during program hours. While we will continue to receive support from our building health staff when available, it is essential that Explorers is fully prepared to administer health support independently.

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 [Community Education Medication Form](#) along with the medication in the original prescription container must be turned into 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 and Injuries

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 medical 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, and 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.

Air Quality

Explorers uses the [Outdoor Air Quality Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#) to determine outdoor activity duration. If the air quality falls under the orange category (unhealthy for sensitive groups), Explorers will limit outdoor activities and take additional breaks. If the air quality falls under the red or purple category (unhealthy or very unhealthy), Explorers will cancel or reschedule all outdoor activities. Explorers staff monitor the air quality on an app on the site cell phone called 'EPA AirNow'.

Heat Index

Explorers uses the 'OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool' app to determine outdoor activity duration. If the heat index falls into the 'warning' category, Explorers will take extra outdoor precautions that include taking additional breaks, seeking out shaded areas, and extra water breaks. If the heat index falls into the 'danger' category, Explorers will cancel or reschedule outdoor activities.

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 [Community Education Medication Form](#) will also need to be filled out for any necessary medication administered. We are a peanut/treenut free program. Please do not bring snacks that include peanuts and/or tree nuts.

BEHAVIOR AND STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

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.

BEHAVIOR AND STUDENT CONDUCT MANAGEMENT

Explorers strives to establish and maintain a behavior guidance system that reinforces positive behaviors. Explorers has established behavior and student conduct

expectations. These expectations take into consideration the needs of each individual student and strive to create a harmonious group childcare experience.

- Staff will explicitly teach and explain the rationale for the rules of the program and behavior and student conduct expectations
- Staff will act as positive role models
- Behavior and student conduct expectations are developmentally appropriate for each age grouping in the program
- Expectations will be consistently enforced and behavior management tactics will be logical and age appropriate, such as redirecting to other activities or limiting choices

Explorers will regularly evaluate the program's ability to meet each student's needs. Behavior that does not meet our standards will be addressed accordingly. The decision of the type of consequence in a particular case is at the discretion of the staff involved in collaboration with the Site Supervisor and/or the Explorers Program Manager. Below are the steps taken if a student is experiencing difficulty following the behavior and student conduct expectations in the program.

1. Staff will talk with the student about the behavior and re-teach the needed behavior expectations
2. Parent contact or conference
3. Loss of student privileges, including participation in field trips or special events
4. Referral to support services or community resources
5. Suspension or dismissal from Explorers
6. Other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate

Expectations for Students

- Students will show respect for themselves, the school, peers, and their belongings
- Students will follow the rules of the program and adhere to staff directions
- If a student has a problem or concern, they will notify a staff member immediately
- Students will keep the environment safe and clean and will be respectful of property
- Students are expected to treat all members of the Explorers community, and others who visit our community, with respect

Bottom Line Behaviors

The following behaviors are considered bottom line behaviors and may result in a student being dismissed immediately for the day from Explorers. *If a student is sent home, the parent/guardian or an authorized pick up person is expected to arrive within 30 minutes.*

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

*Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior additional consequences may include suspension/termination of care from the program.

Termination of Care by the Program

If Explorers leadership determines that our program is not meeting the needs of a student, we reserve the right to terminate the care arrangement on a timeline that is in the student's best interest.

As a Parent/Guardian You Agree To:

- Partner with my student and Explorers staff to support a safe community that all children can learn and thrive in
- Encourage my child to be the best that they can be and maintain a positive attitude
- Reinforce the behavior expectations for student conduct at Explorers with my student
- I will encourage my student to inform a staff member when there is an issue or concern.
- Display appropriate behavior while I am visiting the Explorers community

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.

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 both verbally and with a written form. Minor scrapes and bruises handled at Explorers and which need no further attention will be reported to you on a form called a Tier 1 injury form and given to you when you pick up your child(ren).

ABOUT EXPLORERS

Certification

Explorers is a certified childcare program through the The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) which requires us to maintain specific staff-to-child ratios to ensure the safety and well-being of every child.

Staff

Site Supervisors are experienced professionals with degrees in child development, education, or recreation. All staff are involved in on-going staff 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 1:15 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. Staff will spread out to ensure all children are being supervised. Each site has 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 reasonable belief that an authorized pickup is under the influence.

Additional Student Support

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

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.

See Health and Safety section for details on program modification due to air quality or heat index concerns.

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 District Nutrition Services.

On non-school days and in the summer, children must bring 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 a \$5.00 one-time charge for the entire summer. Breakfast and snack are provided.

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.

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

Pets/Animals in the Program

Minnetonka Public Schools does not generally permit students, staff and visitors to bring dogs and other animals/pets into school district locations. However, exceptions to this rule are permitted as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or as otherwise permitted in our District guidelines.

On occasion, Explorers may have presentations from outside organizations involving animals. You will be notified in writing if any animals will be present in the program for any reason.

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