Kids' Choice Family Handbook



School Year 2026-27 & Summer 2027

Serving Kindergarten through Sixth Grade

South St. Paul Public Schools

Besides the policies that are included and/or referred to in this handbook, youth and families are expected to be aware of and to abide by all of the District's policies. All of the District's policies can be found on the District's website at www.sspps.org under the tab titled About SSPPS and then School Board, and District Policies. Youth should pay particular attention to the policies in Section 500 which specifically pertains to youth. Questions regarding policies can be directed to the South St. Paul Community Education Director.

Welcome to Kids' Choice!

Mission Statement

To provide a quality program that fosters a safe, cooperative, caring and creative environment which promotes individual uniqueness, self-esteem, teamwork and respect for all.

Vison Statement

South St. Paul Youth Programs is a place where we create a safe atmosphere for youth to develop into self-confident, culturally enriched, compassionate leaders who embrace life-long learning and desire to make a positive change in the world.

Kids' Choice is a tuition-funded, nonprofit, school-age care program provided by or on behalf of the South St. Paul Public Schools Community Education department.

The program offers quality educational, recreational, and developmental activities and a stimulating and supervised environment for school-age youth. Each youth is valued as a unique person capable of worthy ideas and actions. The concerned and caring staff provides a supportive climate to help youth develop self-respect and become self-directed and self-disciplined individuals. The Kids' Choice program focuses on meeting the needs of the youth and families in the community.

Kids' Choice Provides:

- Creative opportunities
- Opportunities for youth to choose activities
- Recreational activities
- Safe spaces in a group setting
- A stimulating environment in a cheerful atmosphere
- Warm, caring staff members who instill a feeling of safety and belonging

Kids' Choice Supports Values of:

- Healthy self-concept
- Responsibility for one's behavior
- Respect for others
- Spirit of cooperation
- Community engagement

Kids' Choice Youth Participate in the Following Activities:

- Arts and crafts
- Science
- Group time – large and small
- Indoor and outdoor physical activity
- Self and staff-directed daily activities
- Opportunities for individual time, homework and computer work
- Library visits (in the summer) and reading programs
- Special guests/field trips

Administration & Funding

The Kids' Choice program is under the direction of the South St. Paul Community Education Director and Site Supervisor. The program abides by the South St. Paul Public Schools District policies and procedures. Kids' Choice is a self-supporting program; program costs such as staffing, bus transportation, supplies, field trips and special activities are funded with tuition fees paid by parents/guardians.

Serving Students with Special Needs

The Kids' Choice program will make reasonable accommodations to serve youth with unique needs and to ensure the integration into the program by working with the child, family, school personnel and program staff. An intake assessment will take place with the above mentioned parties prior to the youth's first day of attendance. Youth are supervised in a group site/setting, their behavior is not expected to routinely require one-on-one supervision. If a youth is not successful in the program environment with the level of support offered and after implementing the program's reasonable modifications, alternative care arrangements may be recommended.

Since youth are supervised in a group/site setting, their behavior is not expected to routinely require one-on-one supervision. Each youth is evaluated on an on-going basis as to the program's ability to meet his or her needs.

Program Standards

Program standards are adapted from guidelines developed by the Minnesota Department of Youth Family and Learning, Minnesota Community Education Association and the Minnesota School-Age Care program and Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Kids' Choice is staffed with caring people experienced in the fields of education, early childhood, youth development and/or school-age care. Background checks are completed on all employees supervising youth. Child Development, Health and Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Abusive Head Trauma and Mandated Reporting are yearly requirements, and staff development hours/classes related to school-age care are also provided.

The Kids' Choice Program ratios as follows:

Youth in grades K through 6- 1:15.
Staff members organize program activities so that groups do not exceed sizes that can be safely supervised. Ratios and supervision of program participants may be adjusted for activities.
When in groups the maximum group sizes are: Youth in grades K through 6 - 1:30.

Program Options

Before-School Program: 6:30 a.m. - Start of the School Day
Before school opportunities include self-directed and structured activities, a variety of projects and enrichment activities, physical activity time, homework help and computers. Breakfast may be purchased from the District Food Service Program.

After-School Program: End of the School Day - 6:00 p.m.
After School opportunities include self-directed and structured activities, a variety of projects and enrichment activities, physical activity time, homework help and computers. A snack is provided by the program.

Non-School Day Program: 6:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Pre-Registration is Required
Non-school days are optional when school is not in session with the exception of District holidays and program set-up days. Non-School Day opportunities include self-directed and structured activities, a variety of projects and enrichment activities, physical activity time, computers, special guests and field trips. Breakfast and snacks are provided by the program, lunch is provided by the families.

Summer Program: 6:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Entering Kindergarten - Entering Sixth Grade
The summer program is for youth enrolled in South St. Paul Public Schools. Summer opportunities include self-directed and structured activities, a variety of projects and enrichment activities, physical activity time, computers, special guests and field trips. Breakfast and snack are provided by the program, lunch is provided by the families. Registration is required for the summer program; please note that the summer registration is different than the school-year registration.

Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks & Dietary Needs

Breakfast

Breakfast is served only on non-school days and during the summer between 8-8:30 a.m. Youth are served a nutritious breakfast, provided by the program. Breakfast during the school year can be purchased through the Districts' Food Service Programs. Breakfast menus are posted in the Family Area on site and online.

Lunch

On non-school days and during the summer, families provide a bag lunch. Milk or juice is provided by Kids' Choice. If youth bring a beverage for lunch, it must be in an unbreakable container. Kids' Choice strongly discourages soda. We do not always have access to a refrigerator/freezer, microwave or stove; lunches should be packed accordingly.

Snack

A healthy snack is served every afternoon at all Kids' Choice programs. A snack may be cookies, vegetables and dip, fruit, etc. Milk or juice is provided by Kids' Choice. Snack menus are posted in the Family Area on site and on the program website.

Special Dietary Needs

The Kids' Choice program will strive to accommodate for a youth's special dietary needs as prescribed by the youth's source of medical care. Families are responsible for providing the prescribed diet items that are not part of the program's menu.

Transportation

Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from the program site. Transportation for field trips is provided by a contracted busing service.

Days Closed

Please refer to the Kids' Choice calendar for days that the program is closed. The program calendar is included in your registration materials, monthly newsletter and on the website.

Photographs

Photographs, videos and other documentation taken at Kids' Choice and/or Community Education activities may be submitted to newspapers, used on District Web sites and/or appear in other print and electronic publications. Parents/guardians give consent to use these photos and/or videos at the time of registration. If you wish to change your approval at any time, please submit a written request to the Kids' Choice office.

Grievances

If you have a grievance regarding the Kids' Choice program or a staff person, please report it to the Site Supervisor.







Items From Home

The sites are fully equipped with age-appropriate games and activities for the youth to enjoy. If you decide to allow your youth to bring a game or toy from home, please follow the guidelines and policies below:

- The items must be nonviolent and age appropriate.
- The item should be marked with the youth's name in permanent marker.
- Kids' Choice is not responsible for any damage or loss that may occur. We do not have secure storage for items from home.
- While we encourage and teach youth to share, please talk to your youth about sharing items with others who may not treat them with the same respect as they do.
- If an item becomes a problem, your youth will be asked to leave it at home.

During the school year, the Kids' Choice program and the elementary schools work cooperatively in regards to this matter. Families and program participants should realize that if they are playing with a toy/item from home during school hours, they will be subject to building discipline. In addition to building discipline and according to the Kids' Choice policy, the participant will not be allowed to bring items from home to the Kids' Choice program if it becomes an issue during the school day.

Please see the Technology Usage section of this handbook regarding the use of electronic devices including, but not limited to, cellular phones, smartphones and smartwatches, digital cameras, laptop computers, tablets and other personal electronic devices capable of transmitting data or images during Kids' Choice programming time.

South St. Paul Program Locations

Kaposia Education Center

1225 First Ave. S.
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Site Supervisor: 651-398-3699

Lincoln Center

357 Ninth Ave. N.
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Site Supervisor: 651-398-2532

Contact Information

Community Education Office

Central Square Community Center
100 7th Ave North
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Office Staff Phone Numbers

Registration/Billing	651-306-3631
Fax	651-552-3108

Website

communityed.sspps.org

Facebook

www.facebook.com/SSPPS6 and www.facebook.com/TriCommunityEd

Registration Procedures

Enrollment is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Full-time registrations will receive priority. After available spots are filled, youth are placed on a waiting list.

To register for Kids' Choice school year, summer or non-school day care you will need to create a login and online childcare account. A registration fee will be collected once your registration is approved. If you have any questions about registration or payment please call 651-306-3631.

School-year, summer and non-school day registration must be received by the deadline date; after the deadline, regardless of attendance or withdrawal, all registered youth are billed. Families registering late are placed on a waiting list and are charged the higher non-school day rate if space becomes available.

Enrollment Requirements

- Complete registration online for each new school year and summer program
- Be available to answer an additional questionnaire about your student's unique needs
- Submit a nonrefundable registration fee for each youth for every new school year and summer program
- Submit authorization from any agency providing sliding fees or county payments
- Submit above items to the Kids' Choice office one week prior to youth's first day
- Registration will not be accepted if Child Care Account has an outstanding balance

Withdrawal/Change of Schedule Notice

Parents/guardians planning to withdraw their youth from Kids' Choice may do so at any time; however, notice must be given in writing or verbally to the office staff two weeks prior to the last day of attendance. Tuition is charged for two weeks from the notification date. If your youth care needs to be changed, a youth's daily schedule may be changed to accommodate the request if openings in the program are available. Please note, once the monthly invoice is sent out for the month, changes cannot be made to your child's schedule. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying for all days in which your child is scheduled. Please contact the Kids' Choice office with changes or withdrawals.

Types of Fees

Tuition Fee

For fee information, visit www.sspps.org/schoolagecare or call the Kids' Choice office at 651-306-3631.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is charged to each youth enrolling in each new school year and summer program. Youth who leave the program and return at a later date are reassessed a registration fee.

Early & Late Fee

Parents/guardians arriving before 6:30 a.m. and after the 6:00 p.m. (5:30 pm on non-school days and summer) closing time, regardless of weather or other circumstances, are assessed an early/late fee for each youth for each 15 minutes, or fraction thereof, that they are early/late. The charge will appear on the next billing statement. This is for emergency use only; if used excessively, families will be contacted by the Kids' Choice Site Supervisor and may be asked to find alternative care.

Withdrawal Fee

Please see page 6 for information on withdrawing from the Kids' Choice program.

Extra T-Shirt Fee

Youth are required to wear their current Kids' Choice T-shirt on all field trips. If your youth arrives without his or her T-shirt, one will be given to the youth and your account will be assessed the current extra T-shirt fee.

Payment Procedures

Each month you will receive your bill via email. Tuition fees cover a one-month period and are due in advance of the youth care service. Tuition statements are emailed by the first work day of each month prior to the month of service. Please note, once the monthly invoice is sent out for the month, changes cannot be made to your child's schedule. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying for all days in which your child is scheduled. Tuition is due the 15th of each month or the closest working day to the 15th. Tuition must be paid in full by the 15th, or the closest working day to it, to avoid a late charge. Enrollment in our Auto-Payment Program is the most convenient way to pay your bill. You may enroll in the Auto-Payment Program online or by calling the Kids' Choice office. Your credit card or electronic check will automatically be charged on the due date. Payments may also be mailed or dropped off in person.

Accounts must be at a zero balance by the final working day of the month in order to continue attendance on the first working day of the new month. A reminder is issued to families with an outstanding balance on the 16th or the closest working day to that date each month.

The Kids' Choice program is tuition funded. Therefore, it is imperative that all fees are paid on time. Accounts are considered delinquent if payment is not made in full by the final working day of the month. Care is terminated as of the first working day of the new month if your account is delinquent. School-year and summer program registrations are not accepted if accounts are delinquent in status. These stipulations apply to county co-payments and other charges not covered by the county.

Cash payments must be made in person at the Kids' Choice office. Payments by check or money order may be sent by mail or brought to the office. Kids' Choice also accepts debit and credit card payments in the office, online or over the phone. When paying by credit card, the amount shows up on credit card statements as a payment to Community Education. Site staff members are not allowed to take payments on site. For billing questions, please call 651-306-3631.

Payments may be mailed or brought to:
Community Education Office
100 7th Ave North
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Please note: Re-entry into the program by families previously turned into collections will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In the event that re-entry is granted, all outstanding tuition fees must be paid in full prior to the first day of service. In addition, all new monthly tuition fees must be paid in full prior to the first day of each month of service.



Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts

Families using Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts through their employers may submit the forms to the Kids' Choice office for verification. The forms must be completed, except for the authorization signature, and should accompany payment. Only the actual amount paid is verified. Allow several days for the forms to be completed and returned to you.

Returned Checks

Checks returned due to insufficient funds or closed accounts are assessed a service charge. If two non-sufficient funds (NSF) checks are received, all further payments must be made by money order, cash or cashier's check.

County and Federal Assistance Programs

Fees not covered by the assistance programs becomes the responsibility of the parent/guardian. For example but not limited to: early drop off/late pick up fees, t-shirt fees, registration fees, bi-monthly copayments, absences or exceeding authorization hours. The program is required to report to the County when payments are not being paid.

Tuition Refunds & Credits

Refunds or credits are not given for emergency school closing days or days when youth are absent due to illness (including covid-related), vacations, behavior suspensions or delinquent account suspensions. Families are expected to pay for all days for which youth are registered. In case of an extended illness of the child, families are not charged after five consecutive days of illness; the office must be notified immediately, and a medical certificate must be sent from a physician indicating that the absence and subsequent consecutive absences are due to the extended illness. Youth registered for non-school days receive a refund only if the registration is cancelled prior to the deadline date or if the reserved space is filled by a youth from the waiting list.

If your youth is registered for Kids' Choice on an all-site field trip day and he/she does not attend the field trip, refunds are not given.

Absence

If a youth is absent from Kids' Choice due to illness or vacation, parents/guardians should inform the Kids' Choice staff by calling the site and leaving a message. The school staff does not inform Kids' Choice of a youth absence. If notice is not received, parents/guardians are called to verify the location of their child.

Staff are responsible to make sure that every youth is present at the site by checking them in or out on the iPad.

If a youth is missing, staff will:

- Check voicemail and message board
- Check with front office staff and classroom teachers
- Contact parent and emergency contacts
- Check with Site Supervisor

If youth is still unable to be found, the non-emergency line will be called.











Sign In & Sign Out

For the safety of the youth, parents/guardians are required to walk all the way to the designated door for drop-off and pick-up. A staff member will greet you at the designated door and you will sign your child in and out of the program. The staff assumes responsibility for the youth once they are signed in. Parents/guardians should inform the staff that they are leaving with their child. Please do not ask youth to come to a waiting car. Failure to follow this entire procedure may lead to termination from the program.

Release of Youth

Youth are released only to persons listed as authorized to pick up the child, unless staff have been notified. Youth leaving with another youth's family must have a written note/phone call to the staff from their parents/guardians. In an emergency situation, the account owner(s) must call their youth's site to inform the staff that someone other than the authorized persons will pick up the youth. Please inform them that the staff will request a picture ID. The owner(s) of the account are the only people that can add or delete authorized persons to pick up. Parents/guardians that have custody issues are responsible for communicating on their own outside of the Kids' Choice program to add/remove a person from the authorized pick up list.

Custody Issues

The Program shall give full rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to either parent, unless the Program has been provided with evidence that there is a court order that specifically revokes these rights. Without such information, Kids' Choice assumes joint legal custody and joint physical custody. If a situation warrants their involvement, local authorities may be contacted for assistance. Families with custody issues have to work things out with each other outside of the program. The program cannot mediate or be put in the middle.

Visitors

Individuals wishing to visit the school during these times should adhere to the following expectations:

- Visitors must coordinate with the Site Supervisor to schedule a visit. Visitors are asked not to loiter in/or around the buildings, without purpose.
- Visitors must be listed as an authorized pick-up in order to schedule a visit. The owner(s) of the account are the only people that can add or delete authorized persons to pick up.
- Adult visitors are role models in our buildings and should abide by all Kids' Choice and district rules and codes of conduct.
- Visitors who have not received permission from the Site Supervisor to be in the building will be asked to leave the premises. Failure to comply will be considered trespassing and the police will be contacted if necessary.
- Should an attempt be made by an unauthorized person to remove a child from Kids' Choice, the Site Supervisor will immediately notify the custodial parent/guardian and contact the police if necessary.

As a guest in our building, it is expected that visitors remain in visual contact with a Kids' Choice staff when with youth. For the protection of our youth, as well as our visitors, it is expected that visitors refrain from physical contact with our youth and do not discipline them.

Security Plan for Kids' Choice Sites

Two-way radios, attendance sheets and iPad sign in and out keep staff members aware of where the youth are on site at all times.

Safety Drill Procedures

The youth and staff of the Kids' Choice program will participate and record five fire drills, five lock-down drills and one severe weather drill during the school year. Drills will also be conducted during the summer program on a smaller scale.

Procedure for Late Parent/Guardian

If a youth remains at Kids' Choice after the 6:00 p.m. (5:30 pm on non-school days and summer) closing time, the staff notifies persons listed as authorized to pick up the child. If none of these persons are available or able to come for the child, and if the parent/guardian has not arrived by 7 p.m. or contacted the staff, Dakota County Youth Protection/Social Services and local police are called. The youth is then turned over to their custody.

Mandated Reporting

Minnesota State Statute mandates all staff working directly with youth to report any evidence or suspicion of youth abuse or neglect.

Youth Wellness

Ways to Promote a Healthy Environment for all youth and staff

If a youth becomes ill or is injured while on site, the program will notify the parent or legal guardian(s) so arrangements can be made for your youth to be taken home. The youth is kept in a quiet place and allowed to rest until parents/legal guardian(s) arrive. If parents/legal guardian(s) cannot be reached, persons listed as authorized to pick up the youth are called. Please keep your emergency contact information up to date. Refunds are not given for days youth are absent from Kids' Choice due to illness, unless it is longer than one week and a doctor's note is sent to the Kids' Choice office.

Youth who are ill or exhibiting any symptoms of illness should not come to school. Always keep your youth at home if an elevated temperature is present. Temperature should be normal for 24 hours (without medication) before they return to programming.

- Youth with a temperature of 100 degrees or above cannot stay in school, a parent/legal guardian(s) will be notified to pick them up.
- Youth must be 24 hours fever free before returning to programming.
- If your youth has vomited or had diarrhea, please keep them home until 24 hours after the last episode.
- If your child has any rash that may be disease related or you do not know the cause, check with your family doctor before sending the youth to the program.
- Youth should be dressed appropriately for the season and specific weather as they go outside most days during programming.
- Staff will verbally assist a youth if they have a toileting accident. Youth are expected to care for themselves and to be toilet trained.
- It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) to educate their youth on proper personal hygiene techniques.
- Daily physical activities and healthy food choices are encouraged and offered daily.

Pets

Please Do Not bring family pets into the school for visitation/sharing. Student allergies and uncharacteristic, nervous responses by animals create health and safety concerns at school.

Balloons (Latex) and Flowers

Balloons and flowers of any kind are not allowed in school due to various youth allergies and the difficulty of transporting home.

Medication

District procedures and Minnesota State guidelines require the following:

- Each year, at the beginning of the new school year, a form must be completed and placed on file with the youth programs for any youth to receive any medication or medical treatments during programming hours. New forms are required whenever there are changes in dosages or times medication is to be given.
- All medications need to be FDA approved. If there is a question about FDA approval, parents/guardians are to check with the Site Supervisor who will consult with the Licensed School Nurse.
- The Site Supervisor under the Licensed School Nurse, or in the absence of the Site Supervisor, a staff member may be designated by the LSN to administer the medication.
- Medication to be given during the program must be supplied in the original prescription bottle. The pharmacist should prepare a container of the medicine with the appropriate labeling for school use.
- Written parent/guardian permission and written physician orders are required for any prescribed medications. This medication administration must be at the discretion of the Licensed School Nurse to the Site Supervisor.
- Forms are available on site.
- All medications must be accompanied by specific instructions, including dosage, time of day, and length of time needed. Medication should be given at home whenever possible.
- All medicine will be kept in a locked cabinet.
- For the safety of all youth, it is recommended that the parent/guardian bring their youth's medication to the program directly.

Medical Devices

Medical devices (crutches, wheelchairs, neck braces, etc.) need to be provided by the family or physician and require a doctor's note indicating restrictions and length of use.

If you have health concerns regarding your youth, please indicate those concerns at the time of registration and the Site Supervisor will call you to discuss your concerns.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

During the summer months, parents/guardians may supply sunscreen and insect repellent; These products are not supplied by the program. Application of sunscreen and/or insect repellent require written permission; parents/guardians give consent to use sunscreen and insect repellent at the time of registration.

The Kids' Choice staff may assist your child, but the staff is not responsible for applying any lotion/repellent.

Accidents & Incidents

Parents/guardians are informed of any accident/incident involving their youth at Kids' Choice.

- In the case of a minor injury, staff members administer first aid and complete an accident/incident report for the parents/guardians to review and sign when they come for their child.
- In the case of a serious accident, families are called to take the youth for medical attention. An accident/incident report is completed for parents/guardians to review and sign.
- In the case of a life threatening emergency, 911 is called. Paramedics determine whether the youth needs further treatment or needs to be transported to the hospital. The family is notified immediately.

Staff are trained yearly on CPR, First Aid and Head Trauma.

Insurance

The school district does not carry accidents or health insurance for the youth. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for insurance and health coverage for their youth.

Weather Conditions

If South St. Paul Public Schools are closed or delayed due to weather conditions, the Kids' Choice Program makes adjustments to its programming. Refunds are not given for Emergency School Closings. If school is dismissed early because of weather or maintenance problems, Kids' Choice is also closed. Early closings are aired on all major local television stations (channels 4, 5, 9 and 11). If school is closed for the day or has a late start and or mid-day cancellation, the Kids' Choice program adjusts programming as follows:

Before-School Program

School closed: There is no before-school Kids' Choice.
Late start: Kids' Choice will start late in accordance with the emergency announcement. An example, for a 2 hour late start, the program will begin at 8:30 am instead of 6:30 am.

After-School Program

School closed: There is no after-school Kids' Choice.
Late start: After-school Kids' Choice is not affected.
Mid-day cancellation: After school Kids' Choice will be canceled. Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up youth from school immediately.

Building Emergencies

If South St. Paul Public Schools are closed or delayed due to weather conditions or emergency measures, the Kids' Choice program makes adjustments to its programming. If the emergency situation happens during programming hours, Kids' Choice adjusts as follows:

- Kids' Choice uses District buses or walks the youth to another open site.
- Site Supervisors are responsible for bringing any paperwork that is needed to the other site so regular programming can continue.
- A note is posted on the entrance door notifying families of the location where the youth were transported.
- When possible, Kids' Choice airs the closing using the same media as South St. Paul Schools during a weather-related school closing.
- The Kids' Choice Site Supervisor will contact the families, if possible, and let them know about the situation and where to pick up their child.

Please note: phones in the District may not be in operation in an emergency situation, therefore the staff is not able to call parents/guardians. Listen to your local radio and television stations. If the radio or television announcements do not mention the Kids' Choice program, the above information still holds true. When school is closed, families are still charged the daily tuition.

Field Trip Procedures

Kids' Choice offers opportunities for youth to go off site to a variety of destinations. Youth are transported by contracted school buses. Kids' Choice may go on walking field trips; permission for all of these trips are given at the time of registration.

Youth must be on site before the set time frame for each field trip, which will be communicated by the Site Supervisor due to set field trip times. Any youth arriving after the set time may be turned away that day, at the discretion of the Site Supervisor.

Youth care is not provided on site during all-site field trips because all Kids' Choice staff members attend field trips with the youth; therefore, all youth attending Kids' Choice during the time of a scheduled field trip must attend the field trip. You may also make other youth care arrangements during that time; please note that refunds are not given for these days.

Staff Responsibilities

- A Kids' Choice Program Field Trip Information, Checklist and Buddy Chart is completed and brought along on all field trips.
- Field trip ratios are 1:10 on a typical trip and 1:6 for swimming trips. The destination and type of activity determines the final ratio. Volunteers are not to supervise a group on their own and need to complete a background check.
- Staff members count their group and perform a verbal roll call before leaving for trips, continuously during the trip and before leaving to return to the site.
- Staff members are with their groups at all times.
- Youth are not allowed to wander from a staff member to use the restroom or buy concessions or gifts.
- The Kids' Choice staff may assist your child, but the staff is not responsible for applying any lotion/repellent.
- Weather conditions are considered prior to the trip, and necessary adjustments are made which may cause cancellation of the field trip.
- Staff members and youth must wear their current Kids' Choice T-shirt on the field trip. Should a youth arrive at the site on a field trip day without their current T-shirt, families will be asked to return home for the T-shirt or have the current extra T-shirt fee assessed to their account for a new Kids' Choice T-shirt.



What Families Can Expect From Kids' Choice

- Provide a safe, supervised and inviting environment where youth have fun, feel welcome, are safe and develop friendships.
- Provide qualified, caring staff who show a genuine respect for youth, act as positive role models and promote each youth's self-esteem.
- Provide a variety of developmentally appropriate projects and academically enriching activities as well as indoor and outdoor activities and self-directed play.
- Continually evaluate the program in relation to the needs of youth, families and staff.
- Keep families informed through an orientation to the program, (school year and summer), site newsletters, weekly site emails, web page, information boards, informal conversations and formal conferences as requested by the family. Program surveys are requested twice during the school year and one time during the summer program.

What Kids' Choice Expects From Families

Kids' Choice requires the involvement and cooperation of both the staff and families to help build a quality program. Families' cooperation is appreciated in the following areas:

- Check the Family Area, e-mail and ParentSquare daily for new information and reminders, and meet all registration deadlines.
- For the safety of the youth, parents/guardians are required to walk all the way to the designated door for drop-off and pick-up. A staff member will greet you at the designated door and will sign your child in and out of the program. The staff assumes responsibility for the youth once they are signed in. Parents/guardians should inform the staff that they are leaving with their child. Please do not ask youth to come to a waiting car. Failure to follow this entire procedure may lead to termination from the program.
- Communicate concerns about your youth to the staff. They are there to help.
- Listen to staff members' concerns about your youth's behavior, and cooperatively work toward an agreeable solution to any problems.
- Talk to the Site Supervisor if you have a question, concern, suggestion or compliment. Your input is appreciated!
- Families will not be physically/verbally aggressive or use inappropriate language with staff or program participants. Local police will be called and families may be terminated from the program.
- Address the staff with issues that may involve other youth in the program. Families are not to address other youth themselves.
- Have youth dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. Hats, boots, mittens and snow pants are a must during cold months. Tennis shoes are always needed to participate in gym activities.
- Do not allow youth to wear clothing that promotes tobacco/alcohol or that has objectionable language and/or hats to the program. Clothing and accessories of this nature are not allowed at Kids' Choice.
- Do not allow youth to bring toy weapons in order to adhere to School District policy.
- Be prompt in coming for your youth. The program closes at 6:00 p.m. (5:30 pm on non-school days and summer)
- Send a bag lunch on non-school days and summer programming if lunch is not provided.
- Inform the staff of any changes in address, phone number or other pertinent information.
- Pay Kids' Choice tuition promptly.
- Pets are not allowed on site due to the possibility of allergies and sanitary reasons.
- Inform Kids' Choice staff of your child's absence and reporting when your child is picked up early (illness, appointments, etc.).

Volunteering

You are always welcome to volunteer at the Kids' Choice program or on field trips (entrance fees will be paid by the volunteer and you will need to provide your own transportation). Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. All volunteers are required to complete a district background check each school year as well as a DHS background study. The fee for the background check is paid by the district. Younger family members not enrolled in the program are not allowed to participate in the field trips. See your Site Supervisor for the Volunteer Application. Please follow District policy for visitors/ volunteers in the building. Volunteers will not supervise or be left alone with a group of youth.

What Kids' Choice Expects From Program Participants

Respect the rights of others and yourself; "Be safe, respectful, and responsible."

- Be responsible for your actions.
- Know and follow program expectations.
- Respect the property of others and the program.
- Use only acceptable language.
- Use only appropriate physical contact.
- Follow the direction of the Kids' Choice staff.
- Remain with a staff person at all times; ask permission to leave the area.

Youth are supervised in a group/site setting, their behavior is not expected to routinely require one-on-one supervision. Each youth is evaluated on an on-going basis as to the program's ability to meet his or her needs.

Technology Usage

The use of the school district computer system and access to the internet is a privilege, not a right. Youth are expected to utilize technology in a manner that is consistent with the educational mission of SSPPS. District Policy 474 outlines SSPPS's expectations for student use of technology, to include the use of all electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, etc.). All youth are expected to act in accordance with this policy. Misuse of technology includes conduct resulting in harm or potential harm to the youth, another individual, or another individual's property. Youth should be aware that misconduct involving the misuse of technology may also meet the definitions of other offenses outlined in the District Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

- Use of personal electronic devices is a privilege, not a right.
- Youth are discouraged from using personal electronic devices during programming time.
- Misuse of devices at Kids' Choice are subject to the consequences listed.
  - Verbal warning
  - Confiscation
  - Parent notification
  - Parent meeting
  - Loss of other technology privileges during program time
- Parents are asked to not disrupt the school environment by contacting their children via their cell phone and should instead contact the Kids' Choice site to leave their child a message.
- Youth are not allowed to contact parents during programming using their personal device.
- Youth must ask permission to contact parents and will use a school phone when given permission by Kids' Choice staff.

Behavior Guidance

Student Policies

Besides the policies that are included and/or referred to in this Handbook, students are expected to be aware of and to abide by all of the District's policies. All of the District's policies can be found on the District's website at www.sspps.org under the "About SSPPS" tab and then click on the "School Board" link and then "District Policies" link. Students should pay particular attention to the policies in Section 500, which specifically pertains to students. Questions regarding policies are to be directed to your Site Supervisor.

Youth in the Kids' Choice program follow the same guidelines as our district's elementary schools. We want all families to have a clear understanding of their youth's responsibilities to other youth, the staff and the program environment. The program is committed to a safe and orderly environment. Families and staff are expected to mutually support each other in efforts to help youth exhibit responsible behavior within our program community. Significant behaviors will result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the Site Supervisor. We believe that through building a restorative plan it is important to fix a problem or prevent the behavior from happening again.

When conflict or serious behaviors develop, we will work with the individual youth involved in hope to resolve the conflict. A serious behavior concern is defined as one in which a youth's behavior is hampering the smooth flow to the program by requiring constant one on one attention; inflicting physical or emotional harm on other youth; physically abusing staff; damaging property or screaming/running away.

The behavior guidance techniques used by the Kids' Choice staff center around positive reinforcement, restorative practices, positive role modeling by adults, intervention techniques and redirection. The staff provides the youth with guidance that promotes a positive self-concept. The staff helps youth find solutions to current situations, understands consequences and develops self-control. If a youth is having difficulty, the inappropriate behavior is discussed with the youth and action is taken. If the behavior continues, parents/guardians are notified by phone.

An ARC (Act, Reflect, Choose) Form is completed by youth/staff when a serious disciplinary problem occurs. Behavior such as violent outbursts, willfully hurting other youth or staff, throwing objects, profane language, leaving the room/building/group without permission, threatening behavior, verbal or physical abuse, or the inability to conform to the rules of the program/District are considered serious disciplinary problems.

- An ARC Form will be completed and provided to the parent/guardian.
- The staff, parents/guardians and youth are expected to solve the problem.
- If the behavior continues, parents/guardians are called for an in-person conference.
- If the problem cannot be resolved, parents/guardians are asked to make alternative youth care arrangements for the remainder of the day and or additional days.
- Depending on the severity of the conduct and in accordance with program and District policies, immediate suspension/expulsion from the program may be warranted.
- If a youth is removed from the program due to disciplinary actions, they are not eligible for re-enrollment.

Dismissal From the Program

Dismissal from the program could result if:

- It is determined that the program cannot meet the needs of the youth.
- The parent/guardian refuses to follow program procedures.
- Excessive early drop offs/late pick ups.
- Fees are not paid.

South St. Paul Kids' Choice Agreement

I have received the 2026-27 and Summer 2027 family handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read it. I understand that it is also my responsibility to abide by all of the District's policies, as they are presented on the District's website at www.sspps.org under the "About Us" tab and then click on the "School Board" link and then "SSPPS Policies" link. I must ask questions if I do not understand current policies or a portion of the handbook. I understand that I will be held accountable according to the District's policies.

Please sign and return to your Site Supervisor

Youth Name

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

WHERE WE HAVE A VOICE!

SOUTH ST. PAUL SCHOOL AGE CARE

Kids' Choice