

Bears Den



Ava After School Program
417-683-0404

Parent Handbook

Ava R-I School District

2026-2027

Elementary Bears Den Gatekeeper (417)683-0404

Program Director (417)417-260-1138

***Bears Den is designed to keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help
working families***



This program is made possible in part by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant. Oversight of the daily operations is done by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Ava R-1 School District also helps to fund this after-school program.

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21st CCLC Goals

1. Support or increase student achievement and sense of competencies in the areas of reading/communication arts, mathematics, and science.
2. Develop and maintain a quality program that includes a safe and supportive environment, positive interactions, and meaningful opportunities for engagement.
3. Enhance youth's college and career readiness skills and behaviors, including positive school behaviors, personal and social skills, and commitment to learning.

Bears Den Purpose

The purpose of the Bears Den Program in Ava is to provide a safe, positive place for kids to stay before and after school. Enrichment activities will support both academic and social development in fun and engaging activities, along with striving to build successful and productive citizens. Bears Den is affordable for our working parents. The program provides opportunities for family engagement activities throughout the year and educational resources for families with children participating in the program.

Bears Den Services

Bears Den serves all students in PK-8th grade who live in Douglas County. Bears Den is available to families Monday through Friday each day school is in session.

The Elementary program runs from 6:45-7:45 a.m. in the elementary cafeteria. The middle school program runs from 7:00-7:45 in the MS gym and cafeteria. Students can participate in the walking club, gym activities, visit with friends, work on homework, or attend small group tutoring.

The after-school program runs from 3:30-5:45 p.m. in the elementary and middle school building. Students are given a recess, a snack, and tutoring or homework help. Enrichment classes offered are engaging, hands-on, and challenging. Kids are up and moving every few minutes. Classes change every few weeks to keep interest high. Many classes focus on community service projects and promote positive life choices.

If school is released early because of inclement weather, **Bears Den will NOT be available.** Students will follow the emergency plan parents completed and turned in to the classroom teacher.

Students who participate in targeted tutoring are provided with a 30 or 60-minute session per night. Tutoring is designed for students who need additional assistance, but it is not to be considered a punishment in any way. The targeted tutoring is staffed by certified teachers who create an environment that is conducive to learning, and yet students can enjoy it.

Enrollment Forms

If you wish to have your child participate, you must completely fill out and sign an enrollment form for your student. Enrollment forms must be on file before your child may stay for Bears Den. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the staff of any changes. These would include a change of address, a change of contact numbers, a change in lunch status, and changes in family arrangements.

No Fees this school year 2026/2027

Release of Students

1. The parent, guardian, or authorized person must come INTO the building and sign the student(s) out each day they pick them up.
2. Students being picked up before 3:50 pm should go to parent pick-up and not Bears Den.
3. Pick-up may ONLY be made by authorized parties. Permission MUST be in writing and be signed by the legal parent or guardian.
4. Students are not allowed to walk or ride their bikes home. All students must leave campus with an adult or older sibling.

Transportation

There is bus transportation home each night with door-to-door drop-off in town. Buses will leave the campus each night at 5:45 p.m.

Attendance

Attendance in the program is important to us and the grant. The more the kids attend, the more they come away with academically and socially. To encourage attendance, there will be a 60-day pizza party at the end of the year. Any student who has attended the program for 60 days or more will qualify to attend this party.

Parent Resources

The program desires to provide opportunities to parents that will help them and their children. Activities and classes will be planned that provide a time when parents and students can do activities together. Other classes will be offered to parents that are designed to improve their personal and work skills of the parents. Outside resources for parents will be shared in newsletters and posted at the student checkout areas.

Program Responsibilities

- Treat students and parents with the respect due them.
- Motivate students.
- Provide a safe, comfortable, and enriching environment.
- Introduce students to new and innovative hands-on activities not available during the regular school day.
- Create an environment in which Bears Den students take pride.
- Conduct safety drills.
- Provide simple first aid when necessary.
- Mediate disagreements between students when necessary.

Student Responsibility

- Attending the program regularly
- Respecting district technology and internet policies
- Adhering to bus expectations
- Behaving in a safe, respectful, and responsible manner throughout the program

Parent Responsibilities

- Sign their child out each day if they are not riding the bus home.
- Be on time to pick up their children.
- Treat staff with respect.
- Bring concerns to staff.
- Keep up with policy changes.
- Keep child's records updated by notifying staff of changes in enrollment information
- Cooperate with staff on discipline matters.

Special Accommodations

If your child has special medications, allergies to foods, or an Individual Education Plan, please complete that information on your enrollment form.

Bears Den vs School Day

Bears Den is an enrichment program that offers unique opportunities for the kids and their families. Parent involvement is encouraged and expected in Bears Den. Class sizes are often larger than normal school-day classes. Appropriate behavior is required from all kids so a safe environment can be provided at all times.

Bears Den follows the policies and procedures of the Ava R-1 School District. Rules and discipline are the same in the afterschool program as in the regular school day. However.....

Students who are in ISS or OSS during the school day are not allowed at Bears Den during the length of the disciplinary action.

School Day Activities

Children who participate in school activities on or off school property that are not considered part of the Bears Den (sports, clubs, or cheerleading) are welcome to check in and receive a snack BEFORE leaving for the activity. Students must have a permission slip detailing the activity and the time the student will be leaving and/or returning from the activity. Students are also welcome to check into the Bears Den after they finish their practice and are waiting for their parents to pick them up (violin, basketball, or volleyball). Students should have an enrollment form on file for the Bears Den.

Personal Belongings

Children need to bring all of their belongings to the area where the program is held. They are responsible for taking care of their clothing and storing their other possessions in the space provided. Please do not allow your child to bring toys (i.e., handheld video games, iPods, playground equipment) to the Bears Den. The Bears Den is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal items. **NO CELL PHONES or USE OF WATCHES is allowed in the after-school program.** Students may ask to use the school phones if a student needs to call out.

Illness and Accidents

1. If a child shows signs of illness (fever, vomiting, etc.) parents will be notified and expected to pick up the child immediately.
2. Immediate treatment will be obtained for a child who sustains a minor injury (scratches, scrapes, insect bites, etc).
3. In the event of a major injury, the staff will immediately call for professional help. The emergency contacts designated by the parents will be notified. **IF THE EMERGENCY IS SUCH THAT IMMEDIATE ATTENTION IS NECESSARY, THE BEARS DEN STAFF HAS PERMISSION TO CALL AN AMBULANCE.**
4. If a student is not in attendance due to an illness during the regular school day, they will not be allowed to attend Bears Den activities that same day.
5. A child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness will not be readmitted to the

program unless there is a statement by an attending physician that the child can return and participate in activities.

Medication

1. If a child needs to take oral medication regularly during the hours of the Bears Den, the medication must be in the original container, along with a note from the child's physician prescribing the medication, stating the reason for which it is given and any special instructions. Parents must also give written permission. If these instructions are not given, Bears Den Administrators will not be giving any medication.
2. If medication is requested to be kept on hand "for emergencies only" (i.e., asthma attacks, etc.) special instructions must be given in writing from parents and physician.

Media Release Information

Students' names, pictures, and/or work may be released to the media or used on the school web page. This applies to any existing or future media sources, local or worldwide. If you wish for your child not to be included, please contact the program director.

Healthy Snack

A healthy snack will be provided each day. Medically prescribed diets for a child enrolled in the program shall be provided as ordered by a physician. Such diets shall be on file and adhered to in preparation and service.

Bears Den participates in the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) assures that nutritious meals and snacks are served to children and eligible adults enrolled in child care centers, family child care homes, after-school programs, emergency shelters, and adult day care programs by providing reimbursement for meals that meet minimum nutritional standards.

CACFP requires that well-balanced snacks/meals are served, and good eating habits are taught. The program also provides training and technical assistance on nutrition, food service operations, program management, nutrition education, and recordkeeping.

CACFP is administered by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and funded by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Discipline

Activities will be varied and interesting enough in hopes of eliminating boredom-related discipline problems. Discipline will be based on reason and understanding. Exception: there is zero tolerance for fighting or handling other students.

If rules are broken, the staff:

1. Will take the child aside and discuss the problem.
2. Will remove the child from the group for a period of time with the understanding that when the child is ready to rejoin the group and follow the set guidelines, he/she may do so.
3. Loss of privileges in the class/program can be taken away.
4. Will contact the Administrator if the child's behavior is severe.
5. The administrator will contact parents/guardians.
6. If the administrator has to contact a parent for a second time for the same behavior, the student will not be able to attend Bears Den for 2 days.
7. The Bears Den adheres to the "3 strikes, and you are out" policy. After the third infraction, the child will be removed from the program for the remainder of the semester. Staff reserves the right to modify this policy at the discretion of the Director and the appropriate principal.
8. Students who are expelled or placed in ISS from the regular day of school are not allowed to attend the Bears Den for those days.
9. Students who have been suspended from riding the school bus during the regular school day are not allowed to ride the after-school bus home.

Things may happen at home that affect your child's behavior. Please feel free to discuss these matters with the Bears Den administrators. For us to instill self-discipline, we need the cooperation and support from all parents.

Parents may also have a conference with the Bears Den Director or the school principal.

The Bears Den makes every effort to ensure the safety of all children. Disciplinary problems will be handled in accordance with School Board Policies and the Missouri Safe Schools Act. Students may be disciplined or suspended for any of the following:

- Possession, transmission, and/or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol
- Disrespect or insubordination
- The use of improper language
- Fighting
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Rowdy behavior such as pushing & shoving
- Leaving a classroom or school grounds without permission
- Vandalizing, damaging, or stealing school or private property
- Threatening, intimidating, or causing bodily harm to any person (bullying)
- Weapons
- Sexual harassment

Emergency Procedures

In case of Severe Weather, Bears Den will move to the Performing Arts Center (APAC). IF this happens, you can check your student out at the APAC with the gatekeeper.