



***“Building the foundation for a lifetime of success  
through quality early childhood education.”***

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **2024-2025 School Year**

742 Florida Road  
Durango, CO 81301  
(970) 247-0204  
[www.riverhousecci.org](http://www.riverhousecci.org)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Welcome**

History / Mission	Page 2
Anti-Discrimination Statement	Page 2
Hours of Operation / Late Pickup Fees	Page 3
Classrooms & Ratios	Page 3
Curriculum & Assessment	Page 4
Continuity of Care	Page 4
Child Transitions	Page 4
Qualification of Staff	Page 4
Management Team	Page 4

### **Fees & Tuition**

Registration Fee/Annual Fee	Page 5
Tuition Rates + Drop-in Fees	Page 5
Financial Agreement	Page 5
ACH Automated Payments	Page 6
Tuition Assistance	Page 6

### **School Calendar and Closures**

Calendar and Closures	Page 6
Emergency Closures	Page 7
Authorized Contacts	Page 7

### **Riverhouse Relationship**

Family Engagement	Page 7
Parental Code of Conduct	Page 8
Concerns/Negotiating Differences	Page 8
Family Involvement	Page 8

### **Child Medical Information**

Immunization Policy	Page 9
Illness Policy	Page 9
Medication Policy	Page 10
Developmental Screenings	Page 10

### **Meals, Snacks, & Riverhouse Food Program**

School Food Program	Page 10
Snack/ Food Allergies	Page 10-11

### **Daily Child Policies**

Diapering and Toileting Policy	Page 11
Nap & Rest Periods	Page 11
Outdoor Play Necessities	Page 11
Television/Video Policy	Page 12
Field Trips	Page 12
Incident/Injury Reporting	Page 12
Behavior Guidance Approach	Page 12
Lost Child Policy	Page 13
Emergency Drills	Page 13
Child Abuse and Reporting	Page 13
Employing of Riverhouse Staff	Page 13
Closing	Page 14
Signature Page	Page 14

## Welcome to Riverhouse Children’s Center!

We are honored to be entrusted with the care of your child, and it is our intention for you to feel comfortable and genuinely satisfied with this decision. We believe you will be impressed with the individual attention, concern and kindness shown to your child. Should you have concerns regarding the content of this handbook, please feel free to stop by the office for further clarification. We are glad you’re here and we look forward to serving you and your child for years to come.

### History

**Riverhouse was started in 2002 by Lindsay Sherman** in a large home on Animas View Drive. By 2006 Riverhouse had nonprofit status and was serving 67 children under the age of five. In 2010 Durango was facing a childcare accessibility crisis, particularly for infants and toddlers. **Riverhouse’s then-director, Amy Davlin, and a very dedicated Board of Directors (Kim Barker, Jessica Obleton, Christine Yaley, Sandy Gilpin, and Liz Mora)**, created a plan to build a new center in the heart of town.

**In 2011 yet another woman, Janna Schaefer, donated a parcel of land.** A \$1.3 million capital campaign ensued, with the Board and Executive Director spearheading a sustained, community effort. Riverhouse moved into its new, state-of-the-art, facility in May 2013. The Center could now serve 72 children and their families in six classrooms—two infant rooms, two toddler rooms, and two Pre-K classrooms.

**In April 2016 the Board hired Darla (Malouff) Anderson as the new Executive Director.** Darla was still leading the Center when the Covid pandemic erupted, resulting in the closing of Riverhouse on and off throughout 2020 and 2021. Darla and a skeleton crew of extremely dedicated employees kept Riverhouse afloat through this incredibly trying time. After making it through to 2022, Darla resigned to pursue a much-deserved break. **Becky Malecki** was hired to help continue the rebuilding process. Today, in 2024, **Sarah Bishop** is the Executive Director. Riverhouse is committed to improving the quality of the workplace with increased wages and benefits, strong professional development to help teachers become leaders in their fields, and relationships with community donors and regional organizations to help ensure solid financial stability.

**Riverhouse continues the tradition of being led by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors,** an administrative trio who manage day-to-day operations, and a team of over 20 dedicated teachers who share their expertise and hearts with the babies, toddlers, and youngsters each working day. This group of people—totaling over 30 individuals—serves approximately 90 children and 70 families year-round. The goal is to provide the highest quality childcare in a fun and safe environment where everyone is learning to become healthier and more skilled in regard to child development, positive discipline, and trauma-informed care so that we can all be more effective at raising healthy and happy children.

### Mission

The mission of Riverhouse Children’s Center:

**“Building the foundation for a lifetime of success through quality early childhood education.”**

#### **How do we do this?**

- With quality programming, an enriching environment, teachers trained in early childhood development, a social-emotional program (Conscious Discipline), and trauma-informed care.

We strive to help your child by teaching and encouraging social-emotional skills, music and movement, art and imagination, and, in Pre-K language and literacy, math skills, and engineering.

Please help your child(ren) adapt to their classroom by displaying a positive attitude towards the school and teachers, discussing daily events, and bringing home and actively participating in your child’s various projects. Please notify us of any life changes or upsetting situations in your child’s life, so that we may help your child work out any problems with extra care), goal-oriented activities, and play. Feel free to stop by anytime to observe, have lunch, or just hug your child. You are always welcome.

## **Anti-Discrimination Statement**

Riverhouse Children’s Center does not discriminate on any grounds in regard to child enrollment. We are inclusive of all areas of diversity including, but not limited to: ethnicity, race, national origin, ancestry, gender expression or orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, immigration status, marital status, or language.

It is Riverhouse’s position that all infants and toddlers with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized care and support. Inclusion in early childhood programs can set a trajectory for inclusion across the life course. Research shows that children with disabilities and their families face significant barriers accessing child care. For this reason, Riverhouse policy prioritizes serving infants and toddlers with diagnosed disabilities as well as children in foster care.

### **Center HOURS OF OPERATION: 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.**

## **Check In and Check Out Procedures**

### **Daily operating Hours:**

School Day: 7:30am—5:00pm

Child Drop off: 7:30am—8:45am

The school day for toddlers and Pre-K children promptly begins at 8:45 am each morning. We ask that you bring your child to school prior to 8:45 am so they may be properly adjusted to the classroom setting before the school day begins.

Check in and check out is conducted through **an electronic login system called Brightwheel**. Brightwheel is a comprehensive childcare management software that allows communication, monthly invoices, and access to account balance. In addition, parents are able to update contact information and view their child’s attendance schedules.

QR codes are located in the passageways on both the first and third floors of the Center. These QR codes ensure that children are properly checked in and out accurately, process charges, avoid after hour charges when picked up prior to 5:00, and allow for accurate child count data in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation.

**LATE PICK-UPS: Families incur the charge of \$5.00 per minute for every minute beyond 5:00 pm. “Picked-up” means your child is out of the classroom by 5:00 pm.**

## **Classrooms**

Riverhouse Children’s Center is a non-denominational, inclusive, 501(c)3 nonprofit. The school provides early childhood education and care year-round for children ages six weeks through five years old. Riverhouse is licensed through the State of Colorado to provide care for 75 children per day and is comprised of six classrooms:

<b>Classroom Ages Teacher to Child Ratios</b>
Chickadees Infant 1:3
Hummingbirds Infant/Toddler 1:4
Sparrows Toddler 1:5
Blue Jays Toddler/Preschool 1:7
Falcons (Upstairs Classroom) Pre-K 1:10
Eagles (Downstairs Classroom) Pre-K 1:11

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

Riverhouse has adopted an emergent curriculum model, called *the Creative Curriculum for Pre-K* (Falcons and Eagles classrooms). Riverhouse teachers are trained to be in tune with the child's perspective. Lesson plans and daily activities reflect the interests of the children. It is the responsibility of the teachers to: 1) thoughtfully observe the children in their care and determine themes that peak their curiosity; 2) weave social/emotional, language, fine/gross motor, and cognitive learning into the thematic planning process.

Each of the six Riverhouse classrooms utilizes *My Teaching Strategies™*—a common early childhood teaching tool, to individual child assessment, organized documentation, and curricular planning. Parents may opt to utilize Teaching Strategies App to have ongoing access to their child's assessments and growth.

## **Continuity of Care**

Riverhouse recognizes that the child/teacher/family relationship is extremely important to a child's success. Each classroom is staffed with a Lead Teacher for that specific classroom for at least six hours a day. We strive to maintain the same teachers throughout the year. We place Lead Teachers according to their interests and best fit; for example, both infant teachers and Pre-K teachers have special training and experience working with their respective age groups.

## **Child Transitions**

We work in collaboration with parents to ensure smooth transitions from one classroom to another. We welcome newly enrolled children and parents to visit prior to accepting a spot at Riverhouse. You will have an opportunity to see the classroom, meet the teachers, ask questions, and share concerns.

As children age, we are required to move them up into a more age-appropriate classroom. We pay particular attention to children's needs and handle the transitions with sensitivity. Prior to a classroom transition we communicate with both the family and the next classroom, we arrange short visit times to the new classroom so children can become familiar with new teachers. Sometimes mid-year transitions are necessary due to a combination of factors such as a child's age, the age of peers, and how many children are or are not yet potty-trained.

## **Kindergarten Transition**

In the Eagles classroom children are given regular developmental assessments to monitor their level of readiness for kindergarten and to guide the teachers in areas of opportunity. Teachers regularly meet with parents to share information and recommendations in regard to how to make the transition to kindergarten as successful and positive as possible. Riverhouse regularly hears from Durango 9-R that our Pre-K children are wonderfully prepared for "big kid school."

## **Qualification of Staff**

Riverhouse employees carry titles and responsibilities aligned with their training and experience in Early Childhood Education, as recognized by the state of Colorado's Early Childhood Education Credential 3.0 leveling system. These roles include: Administrators, Infant Supervisors, Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Teacher Aides, and Substitutes. Riverhouse adheres to all state licensing requirements for teacher onboarding, as well as annual training required by the CDEC for all early childhood educators. Riverhouse provides access to annual training in Conscious Discipline and trauma-informed care for all teaching staff.

## **Management Team**

The administrators of Riverhouse Children's Center manage the day-to-day operations at the Center. To view current administrators, please visit the Staff page on our website.

As a 501(c3) organization, we are governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meets monthly; we invite any interested parents to participate. To view current board members, please visit the Board of Directors page on our website. Riverhouse's primary mode of communication with families is via Brightwheel. Closure dates, lesson plans, and big happenings are all communicated via Brightwheel.

Sarah Bishop, Executive Director: [sbishop@riverhousecci.org](mailto:sbishop@riverhousecci.org)  
 Infant Program Director, Chloe Weybright: - [cweybright@riverhousecci.org](mailto:cweybright@riverhousecci.org)  
 Preschool Program Director, Becca McKibben: [programdirector@riverhousecci.org](mailto:programdirector@riverhousecci.org)  
 Board of Directors: [riverhouseboard@gmail.com](mailto:riverhouseboard@gmail.com)

## Riverhouse Children’s Center Registration/Fees/Tuition

### Initial Registration Fee/Annual Fee

The initial Registration Fee is due upon confirmation/intention to fully register your child at the Center. The registration fee is non-refundable and does not apply toward your tuition.

- Initial Registration Fee per child: \$150

The Annual Fee is billed every September. Annual fees cover costs of security keys, My Teaching Strategies software, yearly paperwork, and overall intake process.

- Annual registration for 1 child: \$100
- Annual registration for 2+ children: \$100-1<sup>st</sup> child, \$50/child for each subsequent child

### Tuition Rates

The rates below are effective as of September 1, 2024. Please note that tuition is always subject to an increase by vote of the Board of Directors.

Classroom	5 days/week	**2 days/week (T,Th) 3 days/week (M,W,F)
Chickadees	\$1638	\$655 / \$983
Hummingbirds	\$1638	\$655 / \$983
Sparrows	\$1449	\$580 / \$870
Blue Jays	\$1386	\$555 / \$832
Falcons	\$1260	\$504 / \$756
Eagles	\$1260	\$504 / \$756

**\*\*Applicable *only* to families part-time prior to the 2023-24 school year. Riverhouse offers full-time year-round childcare.**

### Drop In Days/Fees

In the event Riverhouse has an open slot in any given classroom, families have the option to “drop in” that day for an added fee.\*

- Chickadees/Hummingbirds: \$85/day
  - All other rooms: \$75/day
- \*drop in rates do not include after hour charges.*

If you have scheduled a drop in day that you wish to cancel, this cancellation **MUST** take place 24 hours prior to the scheduled drop off day. If you fail to give 24 hours’ notice you will be charged the full amount for the drop in day.

### Financial Agreement

All parents and legal guardians are to fill out the Financial Agreement. This agreement **MUST** be returned to the Executive Director before enrollment.

- Tuition rates are subject to change at any time.

- Tuition is invoiced for the upcoming month on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the current month. Tuition payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> and/or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. ACH payments will be processed on the date tuition is invoiced or the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month if specified. **If payments have not been received by the 15<sup>th</sup>, a \$10 per day late fee will be issued.**
- If you intend to withdraw your child from our program, a 30-day notice is required; if under 30 days' notice is given you will be charged for 30 days from the date you gave notice of the schedule change or withdrawal. Emailing an administrator is sufficient for written notice.
- **Riverhouse does not offer vacation/sick credits and does not credit for holiday closures or national holidays in specific months. Tuition is prorated to include all closure dates.**
- If your child is sick, or misses a school day, you may not drop in on another day without incurring a drop in daily cost; Riverhouse cannot trade days of attendance.
- If you fall behind on your tuition payments on any given month, a meeting with the Executive Director will be scheduled to discuss and set up payment options.
- If tuition becomes more than 30 days in arrears, Riverhouse Children's Center reserves the right to withdraw your child's placement.

### **Automated Payments (ACH)**

Riverhouse offers parents the option to participate in convenient Automated Payment options. Tuition statements are processed on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the upcoming month. Your statement is available through the Brightwheel System. Automated payment processing will automatically collect payment via an ACH (electronic) withdrawal from your bank account. Your payment is automatically applied to your invoice. There is no cost to participate in this program. If you choose not to use this option, you are responsible for timely check payments. Tuition is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and a late fee of \$10/day will be charged until payment is received. To participate in the Automated Payment Program, please speak with the administrative team for more information.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Each year Riverhouse Children's Center awards tuition assistance to families in need. The amount of tuition subsidy funds we have available varies according to grants, donations, and overall expenses, but we are committed to ensuring that all enrolled children, regardless of ability to pay the full cost of tuition, are afforded the opportunity of a high-quality early childhood education.

Options for tuition assistance include **1) Colorado Child Care Assistance Program for Families (CCCAP)**--assisting families that make less than 85% of the state's median income, (Google "Colorado CCCAP program") <https://cdec.colorado.gov/colorado-child-care-assistance-program-for-families>, **2) Universal Pre-K**--child subsidy for four-year-olds, and **3) Our in-house tuition subsidy program**--Forms to apply for our in-house program are available in our administrative office at Riverhouse or online on our website. Resources are typically allocated on a semester basis to families who do not qualify for CCCAP but make up to 25% more than the CCCAP cut-off rates. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

## **School Calendar and Closures**

### **Calendar and Closures**

Riverhouse Children's Center strives to align our school calendar as closely as possible with the Durango 9-R School District's calendar in regard to holiday closings. However, Riverhouse is an independent entity and is not affiliated with the 9-R School District. Riverhouse may be open on holidays when 9-R School District is closed and may be closed for required training when 9-R is open. A calendar of closures is provided prior to the Fall session and is posted on our website.

### **All unscheduled closures will be announced via Brightwheel.**

Riverhouse retains the right to announce any closures and/or early dismissal as necessary for the safety and best interest of Riverhouse. Any unplanned closures, such as those detailed below, will always be announced via the Brightwheel App. It is important that parents and families check Brightwheel for messages.

## **Emergency Closures due to Weather or Sickness**

Parents are responsible for making sure that Riverhouse has their most current and up-to-date contact information. In the event of an emergency closure, we will make every effort to reach each parent. If the parent cannot be reached, the child's emergency contacts will be called in the order they are listed.

**Snow and weather related delays or closures will be determined on a case by case basis** and in the best interest of the safety of our staff, children, and families. While 9-R may announce a closure due to weather, Riverhouse reserves the right to have a delayed starting time, or an early pickup time.

**The decision to enact an emergency closure due to sickness** is made by the Executive Director. In the event that the Executive Director is not available, responsibility will fall upon the Program Director(s). Closures of individual rooms or the Center as a whole are only made after consultation with the Public Health Department and our contracted nurse and take into account available qualified staff.

While Riverhouse understands that any closure is a significant hardship for families, please recognize that our foremost responsibility is to ensure safety for all children and staff in our Center. Priority will be given to the safety, mental health, and stress levels affecting children and staff first.

## **Authorized Contacts**

Riverhouse Children's Center, in accordance with the Colorado State Regulations, will only release your child to an authorized adult. An authorized adult is someone who you have specified as an authorized person on your child's Emergency Waiver Form. The designated person will be required to show picture identification at the time of pick up. If an unauthorized person tries to pick up your child, you will be notified immediately by phone. If you cannot be reached, we will call the authorities, and your child will not be permitted to leave the building. All visitors (non-parents) are checked in at the main office and required to show identification.

If a parent or authorized adult who appears to be intoxicated attempts to pick up a child, the Executive Director will request an alternative pick-up person and will immediately contact the authorities if this is resisted.

***An authorized adult must be available to pick up your child at all times.*** If your child is ill, injured, or needs to leave school grounds for any reason and Riverhouse is unable to reach an authorized adult within a 1-hour period, Riverhouse staff will report the incident to the Department of Social Services. If you are over 30 minutes late (5:30pm) picking up your child, and staff is unable to reach an authorized adult, the Department of Social Services may be contacted.

## **Riverhouse Relationship**

### **Family Engagement**

Children learn and have success in school when Early Childhood Educators build strong relationships with families. Riverhouse recognizes the importance of building strong family partnerships. You are your child's first teacher. Your child's classroom teachers are Early Childhood Professionals who can help you learn to listen to, talk to, and play with your child in ways that nurture development.

### **Communication with Families**

Riverhouse conducts parent-teacher conferences twice annually during which teachers share observations and assessments and work with parents to set goals. Newsletters, Brightwheel messages, and daily logs are all methods Riverhouse may use to inform families of current Center events. Riverhouse encourages you to read all Brightwheel messages since they contain important information such as classroom closure due to inclement weather or sickness. Riverhouse administration maintains an open door policy, but encourages families to schedule a meeting to discuss questions and/or concerns.

There are multiple opportunities throughout the year for parents to engage in events and activities to support your child's education. Please read the newsletter or check the doors for flyers regarding opportunities!



## **Parental Code of Conduct**

Acceptance into Riverhouse Children's Center is a privilege. Families are expected to adhere to courteous and professional exchanges with all Riverhouse employees and fellow families. Parents are expected to respect that the employees and Administration of Riverhouse Children's Center are early childhood professionals. Please contact an administrator with any concerns. Any parent or family member who treats a Riverhouse employee in a disrespectful or intimidating manner runs the risk of having their child discharged.

Riverhouse Children's Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer and employs with no bias to race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religious preferences, gender, or age. Parents and visitors are expected to respect Riverhouse employees. Failure to abide by equal opportunity for all may result in the separation of relationship with Riverhouse Children's Center.

## **Communication with Staff Regarding your Child's Education**

Riverhouse Children's Center provides individualized care for children in our care in alignment with state licensing expectations. This includes individualized social and emotional interventions and support. Individualized infant meal plans and individualized health care plans require consent and approval by the family and when applicable, consent by an approved child care health consultant. In the event a family is unsure if their individual family needs, or personal preferences or desires can be met, please consult with Riverhouse administration to discuss your child's rights.

Riverhouse staff are instructed to document all incidents which occur that may be deemed unprecedented, and/or noteworthy, including behavior and injury reporting. These documented incidents will be shared with the parent or legal guardian, require a signature, and are retained in your child's file.

## **Filing a Concern/Grievance Procedure**

Concerns regarding the education of an individual child can be addressed with your child's lead teacher at any time with consideration of the Riverhouse code of conduct. Teachers may consult with administrators regarding best practices in supporting a child. If an acceptable conclusion is not obtained, the concern will be addressed by the Executive Director. Parents and legal guardians have the right to consult with the Executive Director at any time with concerns regarding suspected licensing violations. Parents and legal guardians have a right to file complaints concerning suspected licensing violations with the Colorado Department of early Childhood. Information for this procedure is included in admission documentation and posted in the public lobby.

## **Family Involvement**

Riverhouse is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteers and donations to thrive as an organization. Riverhouse is always in need of parent volunteers! Riverhouse is extremely lucky to have a wonderful group of parents who assist us with anything and everything from painting, organizing fundraising events, and pro bono services to serving on our Board of Directors. If there is something you have to offer the school, please see the Executive Director so that your unique talents can be put to good use.

In the spirit of fostering a strong early childhood educational community, and because it is part of what makes Riverhouse a special place to be, we encourage families to complete a minimum of twelve (12) family hours per school year. Families are responsible for recording their hours in the "Family Hours" binder that is located in front of the Program Directors' office.

Some examples of ways to fulfill volunteer hours include, but are not limited to:

- Speak with your child's teacher about classroom involvement
- Review the monthly school newsletters for any school needs or requests
- Provide an activity or experience for your child's classroom
- Landscaping and grounds maintenance, including shoveling snow

- Putting up and removing playground tarps
- Volunteer in the classroom/field trips
- Help with fundraising
- Help with building maintenance
- Organize and/or contribute to teacher appreciation
- Help with professional services such as tech support, graphic design, etc.
- Serving on the Riverhouse Board of Directors

Please understand our goal is to make family volunteer hours fit each individual family's availability and interests. We are flexible with how you complete your hours.

## **Child Medical Information**

### **Child Medical Information**

#### **Immunization Policy**

Please reference the [Colorado Department of Health & Environment Child Care Immunization Table](#) (attached) for state immunization requirements. Please provide copies of immunization records to the administration offices after any updates. Riverhouse accepts children who are not fully immunized, but highly recommends that all children in a care setting be immunized. A signed doctor exemption letter is required for those children who are not fully immunized.

#### **Illness Policy**

**Please do not bring your child to school if they have displayed any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours: diarrhea, vomiting, fever of 100.4°F or greater, rash, allergic reaction. We require you to notify Riverhouse of any communicable disease. In the event of 3 or more cases of a communicable disease in the Center, we will post this information on the entrance door to the Center. If an individual classroom has 3 or more cases within 24 hours, the classroom must close for 24 hours for deep cleaning.** Please reference the [CO Department of Health and Environment How Sick Is too Sick? Public Guidance](#) document (attached). Riverhouse adheres to this policy.

Sometimes children experience a high level of stress due to changes at home, changes at school, or a combination of external variables. If a child has been in distress for over a period of 30 minutes, parents will receive a phone call from Riverhouse alerting them to the situation in order to elicit advice. In an instance where your child is deemed to be too uncomfortable to be at school, you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately.

If your child becomes ill with diarrhea, vomiting, fever of 100.4°F or greater, a rash or allergic reaction, or is not acting themselves and are unable to finish their day at school successfully, a parent or authorized emergency contact must pick them up. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that a parent or an emergency contact person is available at all times. In case of an emergency or illness, parents will be contacted first. If they are not available, we follow the Emergency Contact list.

**In compliance with student confidentiality, Riverhouse is unable to tell any family which student or classroom has any illnesses.**

If any Riverhouse student has a communicable disease (chicken pox, etc.), parents in the affected classroom will be alerted by Brightwheel with the date of diagnosis and the number of children infected. State Law requires that the local health department be notified of the diagnosis of certain communicable diseases. Please see the illness chart on the last page of this handbook for more detailed information regarding specific illness information.

Riverhouse is required to report to the State of Colorado any time three (3) or more children from the same classroom become ill with similar illnesses/symptoms since it could be deemed as an epidemic. In the event that a potential epidemic is determined, it becomes the responsibility of the Executive Director, in collaboration with Riverhouse's contracted nurse and San Juan Public Health, to make the decision to close that classroom in order to decrease further infection to staff and students and/or allow staff or contractors to extensively clean the environment to limit or prevent additional cases.

## **Medication Policy**

Prescription medication will only be administered by delegated and Medication Administration Certified Riverhouse staff under the following circumstances:

- A Care Plan is in place, written and provided by the Riverhouse school nurse. Riverhouse admin will ensure this is completed and must include the following information:
  - Required written authorization from your health provider (Riverhouse can send the form to your physician)
  - Written parent authorization
  - Documentation on the care and storage of the medication in the log book located in the office
  - The prescription or FDA approved medication in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician, stating the name of the medication, the child's name and the dosage delivered to an administrator (No medications may be left in the classrooms in diaper bags, cubbies, etc.)

## **Developmental Screening**

Riverhouse Children's Center uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) Developmental screening tools as a first step in looking closely at a child's growth, learning and development. In addition, we annually have hearing, vision, and dental screenings; you will be notified when these are scheduled and will receive follow-up information.

Teachers may consult with an Early Childhood Council Mental Health Consultant for recommendations on best practices in supporting the growth and development of all children. Parents or legal guardians are consulted regarding any developmental concerns with their individual child, as identified by a professional. If a developmental concern is identified for a child, parents have the option to accept or decline an observation of their child by an Early Childhood Special Education professional. A possible need for additional screening is determined by an ECSE, and the development of an individualized education plan happens between a family and the specialist overseeing a child's plan. For children under three, Community Connections is a provider. For children three and older, Durango 9-R is the provider. Riverhouse teachers work in close collaboration with these providers to adhere to a child's individualized education plan.

## **Meals, Snacks & Riverhouse Food Program**

### **School Food Program**

Riverhouse Children's Center provides fresh and nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch to all classrooms every day, excluding children under the age of one year. Two meals per day are provided at Riverhouse at no additional cost. Riverhouse accommodates restrictive diets including dairy intolerance and allergies to wheat, gluten, and other foods. If a student has food restrictions, parents may be asked to aid with meal ingredients and provide a physician's note. In addition, we ask that parents do not accommodate their child's preferences by providing alternative meals unless they have food restrictions. Eating can also be a learning experience; in a new environment among their peers, many children will eat vegetables or new foods that they might not eat at home.

Riverhouse strives to purchase organic and local food whenever financially feasible.

### **Infant Milk and Meals (6 weeks to 12 months)**

Parents of infants must provide individually pre-prepared bottles each day for infants fed with expressed breast milk. Prepared frozen/unfrozen breast milk is also accepted, and we ask that parents provide at least 2 empty bottles each day. For formula-fed infants, please bring 2 clean bottles and preferred formula that the teachers will prepare. Infant parents must provide all jar food, cereal and solid foods until 12 months of age. At that time if both parents and infant lead teachers agree, the infant may be introduced to the Riverhouse Food Program. Afternoon snacks (peanut-free) must be provided from home. Open jars of food will be thrown away by the end of each week.

### **Afternoon Snack-Chickadees, Hummingbird**

Families in the Chickadees and Hummingbirds classrooms who are on the Riverhouse Food Program are asked to provide snacks for their child in the afternoon. Snacks (peanut-free) are provided to children on an individual basis.

Open jars or pouches of food will be thrown away by the end of each week.

### **Afternoon Snack—Toddlers & Pre-K**

Families in the Sparrows, Blue Jays, Falcons, and Eagles rooms are asked to provide an afternoon snack for their child. We ask that all snacks are ready to eat, need no preparation, and are peanut-free. Individual snacks must be brought in daily due to lack of storage availability in the classrooms.

We prefer all snack items brought into the Center to be nutritious, free of food-dyes (artificial), and low in sugar and sodium. We ask that items provided are appropriate for the age of the child/children. We request that you not bring popcorn as it is a choking hazard.

### **Food Allergies**

We do provide for children with food allergies, however we will require a physician's note specifying specific allergies and/or suspected allergies. We will set up a meeting with the Program Director and/or school nurse to formulate a Care Plan. This Care Plan will go over symptoms and safety measures to ensure safety for your child at Riverhouse. **Riverhouse makes every effort to be a peanut-free facility; we ask parents to refrain from bringing in any food that contains peanuts.**

## **Daily Child Policies**

### **Diapering and Toileting Policies**

Infant and Toddler parents are required to provide diapers for their child. Children's diapers will be changed every two hours, as well as at any additional time during the day when needed. We cannot toilet train before 18 months due to Colorado Rules and Regulations. All parents are required to provide an extra pair of weather appropriate clothing to leave at school in the event of an accident.

Riverhouse does not coerce a child to use the toilet or punish a child for not using the toilet; for instance, a child will not be held back in a developmentally inappropriate classroom because they are unable to use the toilet. However, any child who is not using the toilet consistently will wear diapers or pull-ups at school.

### **Nap and Rest Periods**

**Chickadees/Hummingbirds** In the Chickadees classroom, children will be allowed to nap when tired throughout the day. In the Hummingbirds classroom, naps are offered in the morning and in the afternoon. We ask that all parents provide a general nap schedule utilized at home for your child so we may do our best to keep your child on a common routine. Due to State of Colorado Sleep regulations, we will not be able to swaddle your child or provide your child with a blanket or lovey. However, we are able to utilize a sleep sack for your child, as long as it is made from a light material and allows for free movement of the child's arms. Please discuss this with the Lead Teacher as needed. We require standard crib sheets to be provided by each family and taken home at the end of each week to be laundered.

**Sparrows/Blue Jays/Falcons** Children are provided with an opportunity to rest or nap each day for two hours; Naps begin between 12:30-1 PM and end two hours later. Children begin on their nap mat but are not forced to sleep; if they don't nap, they are provided with an alternative quiet activity so as to not disturb those who are sleeping. We highly recommend that a blanket, a small pillow, and a small comfort item be brought to school to aid during nap and rest periods. We require standard crib sheets to be provided by each family and taken home at the end of each week to be laundered.

**Eagles** Children are weaned from nap time as the year progresses. Usually there is a 90 minute to two hour nap from September through December, 60 minutes from January until Spring Break, and no nap after Spring Break.

### **Outdoor Play Necessities**

All children **MUST** have the following items\* provided by parents each day at school:

- ✓ Hat for sun exposure, season appropriate
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Outerwear

✓ Sunscreen (Spring, Summer, Fall) – A form must be signed consenting to sunscreen application

✓ Extra Change of Clothes

*\*Please make sure and label each of your child's belongings.*

**Children will have an opportunity to play outside every day, weather permitting\*. Please provide adequate weather appropriate clothing and footwear\*\*.** Raincoats, hats, snow pants, gloves, boots, and coats are required for each child. If outdoor temperature is below 32°F the infants will remain in the Center. If the temperature falls below 20°F all children will remain indoors.

*\*Please be sure to label your child's clothing, this will help prevent clothes being misplaced or lost.*

*\*Alternate large motor activities will be provided for children if weather does not permit outdoor play.*

*\*\*Please be sure to label your child's clothing, this will help prevent clothes being misplaced or lost.*

### **Television/Video Policy**

Riverhouse employs strict enforcement of screen time limitations within our classrooms. We understand that media can get in the way of organic learning and have specified lengths of time that each age group is allowed to partake in TV/Video/Computer programming during the school day. Riverhouse's Television/Video Policy is compliant with mandated Colorado Rules and Regulations regarding Childcare Facilities.

**Zero screen time is allowed for children aged 6 weeks-2 years old.**

**15 minutes of screen time per day is allowed for children 2 years old and up.**

*\*There are special occasions that we may make exceptions (holidays, and winter/spring & summer camps); however these are made on an individual basis and take into account the age of the children and the media that the teacher suggests as it relates to current curriculum content and/or children's current interest.*

### **Field Trips**

Field trip information will be sent out in advance via Brightwheel. Generally, Riverhouse students take the trolley to their destination. If the class is taking public transportation, a signed permission slip is required. Field trips are supervised by parent volunteers and staff. If the trolley is not an option, we will ask parents to volunteer to drive children to the destination or walk if the destination is within walking distance. If your child's class decides to take an impromptu field trip to the park, you will be contacted by your child's teacher via Brightwheel. Impromptu field trips are infrequent except in Summer Session. Riverhouse students will either walk or take a stroller to the nearest park.

### **Incident/Injury Reporting**

In the case of any physical event (injury), a Riverhouse incident report will be completed by the teachers present at the time of the incident. Depending on the severity of the injury parents may be notified immediately via phone call or verbally at pick up. One copy of this report will be sent home and one copy will be filed in your child's file. This report will be confidential to each family; for example, if another child was involved in the incident, the child's name will not be divulged.

### **Behavior Guidance Approach**

As previously stated, Riverhouse Children's Center is an inclusive center. There will be times when children may display behavioral problems that are not considered appropriate. Riverhouse will work with the child, the child's family, and, if needed, an intervention specialist through the Early Childhood Council of La Plata County. In only extreme situations will total removal from the Center be considered. Removal will not be determined until all behavior plans have been exhausted.

The Behavior Guidance Approach of Riverhouse Children's Center utilizes the Conscious Discipline social-emotional program, which includes treating each child with respect in all situations. A child will not be placed in "time out" at Riverhouse Children's Center.

If a child is segregated from the group due to inappropriate or aggressive behavior, they will be accompanied by a teacher and/or a Program Director, who is readily available to help the child feel safe and self-regulate their emotions. For serious behavioral problems which may endanger other children and/or teachers, a parent may be contacted immediately by phone. If a pattern of aggressive behavior develops, a behavior modification plan may be developed

with collaboration from teachers, parents, directors, and external consultants.

In circumstances where a child has physically injured another child or teacher in their room three times during any given day, the child may be sent home. While Riverhouse understands this may be a significant hardship for families, it is our responsibility to keep every child under our care safe at all times. If the need arises, it will be the parent's financial responsibility to seek the help of a behavior specialist. All communication regarding developmental milestones, progress, and any challenging behaviors will be between the parent(s), legal guardians(s), teacher, Program Director(s), and Executive Director. If there are stressful life events happening outside of school, informing us can help us to provide extra care and attention that may help reduce acting out behaviors.

### **Lost Child Policy**

Each staff member is responsible for the active supervision of a specific group of children at all times. A "lost child" is defined as a child who has been separated from the group outside of the supervision of the assigned staff member. In the case of an emergency where a child cannot be immediately located, the teacher will notify an administrator who will notify the child's parents. Locating a lost child becomes a center-wide priority. If the child is not located immediately, an administrator will notify the authorities.

### **Emergency Drills**

All Riverhouse employees are required to undergo training through FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to ensure safety of all children and staff of Riverhouse Children's Center. Colorado State Rules and Regulations require that Riverhouse Children's Center perform monthly fire drills and quarterly lockdown, lockout, shelter-in-place, and site evacuation drills.

In the event of any emergency requiring evacuation of the Center, staff shall attend to the safety of the children first. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and are practiced once a month. In the case of a natural disaster (tornado, wildfire, etc.) we expect parents to pick up their children immediately if possible. If there is an emergency in which Riverhouse must be evacuated, we will notify parents by Brightwheel, and evacuate all children to our neighbors' property.

In the event of a lockdown, Riverhouse will notify parents as soon as possible that a lockdown is occurring via Brightwheel and then again when it is safe to pick up your child. Under certain severe conditions such as but not limited to: inclement weather, loss of water or power, or a national emergency, Riverhouse may close the Center for the protection of the children. In the event of a closure, we ask that your child be picked up within one hour.

### **Child Abuse and Reporting**

Any caregiver or staff member in a child care facility who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately upon receiving such information report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department of human or social services, the local law enforcement agency, or through the child abuse hotline reporting system.

### **Employing of Riverhouse Staff for Personal Childcare**

Riverhouse Children's Center strongly discourages families from asking our employees for childcare outside of Riverhouse hours on days when Riverhouse is in session. These requests place a hardship on Riverhouse as quality staffing is not easy to replace. In the event that you enter into an agreement with a Riverhouse Children's Center employee to babysit for your family outside of the employee's normal work hours and/or outside of the school hours, including transporting your child to or from the school, babysitting must be done away from the school and with the full knowledge and understanding that the individual enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a Riverhouse Children's Center employee. We are not responsible for our employees off duty and as such Riverhouse will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not acting in the scope of Riverhouse employment. This includes transportation of your child by an employee if and when the employee has clocked out. By signing receipt and acknowledgement of this handbook you are consenting to the waiver of responsibility of Riverhouse Children's Center in these circumstances. If you hire a staff member to work for you and that employee resigns their position with us in order to accept your employment offer, you

will be required to pay Riverhouse Children’s Center a \$2,000 finder’s fee to help cover the cost of losing a trained employee and onboarding a replacement.

## In Closing

Thank you for your review of and compliance with the Riverview Parent Handbook. If you have any questions or desire further clarification, please speak with the Executive Director or a Program Director..

Riverhouse Children’s Center is excited to welcome you and your family into our Center. We are committed to maintaining a welcoming and respectful environment for all and to developing strong relationships with our families. Please help us to maintain open communication and contact us with any concerns. Riverhouse Children’s Center is not affiliated with the Durango 9-R School District and is an independent facility that reserves the right to make decisions based upon the best interest of our children. Child and staff safety and health are our primary concern.



**I/We, the parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ have received and read the Riverhouse Children’s Center’s revised 2024-2025 Parent Handbook.**

**We recognize that not all instances may be fully covered by the contents of this handbook and acknowledge that Riverhouse Children’s Center will act with the children’s and Center’s best interests in mind. If we have any concerns or questions we will respectfully speak with the administration of Riverhouse Children’s Center for clarification.**

**We acknowledge that the contents of this handbook may be revised as deemed necessary by Riverhouse Children’s Center. Furthermore, we acknowledge that nothing within this handbook constitutes any promises or contract and that it is a privilege to have our child attend Riverhouse Children’s Center. If we are unsatisfied with the care and education our child receives, we have the right to seek alternate care.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_