



# Clark Fork School

Connecting Education, Nature and Community

## Student and Family Handbook

*( July 2013 )*

2525 Rattlesnake Drive, Missoula, MT 59802 • 406-728-3395 • [www.clarkforkschool.org](http://www.clarkforkschool.org)

# Table of Contents

## Welcome

Our Philosophy .....	3
Place-Based Education .....	3
Program-Specific Philosophies .....	4

## Education

Code of Conduct .....	5
Our Disciplinary Philosophy .....	5
Accommodating Children with Special Needs .....	6
Field Trip Procedures.....	6
Our Neighborhood .....	7
Attendance .....	7

## School Administration

Before Care .....	8
Kids-Niche and Kids-Niche, Jr. ....	8
Communication .....	8
Parent Participation and Expectations .....	8
Board of Directors .....	9
Arrivals and Departures .....	9
Visiting the School .....	9
Complaint/Concern Procedures .....	10

## Admission, Tuition and Fees

Enrollment .....	10
Tuition and Fees .....	10
Late Pickup Policy .....	11
School Closures .....	11
Confidentiality .....	11
Non-Discrimination .....	11

## Health, Nutrition, Safety

Sick-Child Procedures .....	11
Immunizations .....	12
First Aid Policy .....	12
Emergency Procedures .....	13
Medication Administration Policy .....	13
Food Allergy Precautions .....	14
Child Abuse Neglect Policy and Reporting .....	14

# WELCOME TO CLARK FORK SCHOOL

## Our Philosophy

Clark Fork School is Missoula's natural alternative for preschool and elementary education. Our progressive, parent-guided co-op offers individualized attention in small classes, structured academics, education of the whole-child, and exceptional educators.

For 30 years, our student-centered philosophy and experiential learning have been inspiring wonder, nurturing growth, and developing the best in our community's children. Our nature-based curriculum is uniquely suited to Missoula, tapping into children's natural curiosity, while developing deep observation and critical thinking skills.

Clark Fork School's educational philosophy is based on these four principle elements:

Academic Excellence	Clark Fork School provides a creative and personalized learning experience. We utilize inquiry based learning designed to improve critical thinking skills and emphasize understanding. We focus on the interdisciplinary nature of learning grounded in real-world experiences. We support children with an environment that nurtures their emotional, cognitive, physical and social development. We believe every child is gifted and talented. Every child can be a successful learner.
Place-Based Education	Our home and our community are the starting points for all learning. We ground lessons in topics that are important and valued in the students' own lives. CFS provides meaningful learning experiences that generate knowledge and skills transferable to other places and situations. Our teachers help learners build a loving and respectful relationship with the world around them.
Nature	Situated in the heart of the Rattlesnake Valley and surrounded by nature, Clark Fork School takes full advantage of the physical, mental, and social benefits that contact with the outdoors provides children. Our teachers mentor each child to establish a meaningful connection with the natural world.
Community	Clark Fork School is a parent cooperative with a low student-to-teacher ratio. We are a community where adults and children care for and support one another. We work through challenges together and learn to value our own role in the community. We focus on our strengths and take responsibility for our actions. Emotional awareness, positive communication, social growth and creative expression are nurtured in our close-knit community.

## Place-Based Education

Place-Based Education focuses learning within the local community of a student.

### Clark Fork School Ways of teaching

- Utilize our home to inform our life experiences and our ways of looking at the world.
- Explore relationships with both the human environment and the natural world.
- Develop a heightened awareness of detail.
- Explore with purpose and intention.
- Promote an investigative approach to life.
- Expand the classroom to include the school yard, community and watershed.
- Learn to approach the world with curiosity and compassion.
- Enhance appreciation for the natural world.
- Encourage a commitment for serving as contributing citizens.
- Help students feel that they are a part of the natural world, not apart from it.

## Examples

Clark Fork School's low student-teacher ratio allows our teachers to have the time to work with each student to develop the skill of careful observation. They explore, document, and discuss detailed changes in their classroom projects, the school yard, and the Rattlesnake Creek ecosystem. These ways of observing and understanding, however, do not simply apply to their development as scientists. The same skills help them to quickly identify and understand each other's emotions and develop the discerning eye of an artist or photographer.

As children progress through Clark Fork School, they are offered increasingly greater and more detailed exposure to the world around them. The preschool starts by introducing exploration skills primarily in the neighborhood around our school and nearby parks and trails, the kindergarten moves up and into the hills of Missoula, and the primary students explore the open spaces of Missoula in greater depth.

At Clark Fork School, children work to make purposeful products. For example, after studying Missoula using their history, social studies, math and art skills, the primary class produced a book of Missoula history which they then donated to the Missoula Public Library. After thoroughly investigating, researching, and exploring the Tom Green Trail and the community surrounding it, they erected an interpretive sign for the community at the trailhead in Pineview Park.

## Program-Specific Philosophies

In addition to this overall philosophy, the individual programs operate under the following specific philosophies:

### Preschool Program

In our Preschool classrooms, our students explore and create their own learning through play. In our curriculum, we value developmentally appropriate practice, active learning and providing children with uninterrupted periods of open-ended exploration and play. Our play includes both the indoor classroom as well as unstructured play outside on the playground. Children are engaged in developing appropriate social interactions and learning from others' emotions and experiences. Our students have fun while learning how to navigate their world with a curious mind and a sense of creativity.

Developmentally appropriate academics underlie all of our classroom centers and activities. Teachers introduce concepts and encourage children to explore and expand upon them according to their interests and growing skill levels. More importantly, children in our preschool program are learning how to negotiate conflicts, take turns, take risks, share goals, delay gratification, cooperate, solve problems and develop flexibility. We emphasize helping children develop self-regulation and self-control. *What do I do if I cannot have the yellow dinosaur right now at this moment when I really, really REALLY want it!?* We are regularly bringing awareness into what others are feeling and experiencing to help in the development of empathy. Although play is typically an enjoyable and pleasurable experience, students are sometimes faced with frustrations, challenges and fears. We are learning how to identify and acknowledge a multitude of our feelings as well as beginning to understand someone else's point of view.

### Primary Program

The core of the primary program is the idea that children are individuals with varied talents, interests, abilities, and needs, and an education program should evolve and reshape itself to meet and support those differences while encouraging a sense of belonging. By creating a learning community of mixed ages and abilities, Clark Fork School hopes to nurture the concept of cooperative learning in the best sense: that we know more together than individually; that everyone has something to contribute; and that everyone is strengthened and supported when we share our knowledge, talents, and encouragement with one another.

Education is not a fixed collection of data to be memorized, but a process to be explored and nurtured. Our goal is to cultivate an insatiable desire to learn about the world around us, to equip our students with tools they need to find out what they need to know when they need to know it, and to develop the ability to communicate that knowledge with others.

The primary program includes the following unique components:

- Multi-age settings where everyone has something to teach and something to learn
- Mosaic of independent and cooperative small group opportunities

- Continuous progress through core curriculum (such as math and language arts) at the child's pace
- Collaborative thematic studies integrated throughout the curriculum where possible, and focusing on students' sense of place in both the social and natural environments
- Variety of instructional activities including hands-on explorations, oral expression, and written seat-work
- Multiple opportunities to express what is being learned, explored, or felt through art, music, storytelling, and drama

## EDUCATION

### Code of Conduct

We maintain high behavioral expectations for all children at Clark Fork School. We are committed to communicating our expectations to children in a developmentally appropriate manner and believe them to be highly capable of understanding and being accountable for their behavior. It is our opinion that we do them an injustice by asking less of them and believe each child can contribute to an atmosphere of respect and consideration.

Students are taught planning, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to develop their abilities to make sound personal, academic, and community choices. We respect the rights of students to make choices and experience the consequences of those choices when it is appropriate.

Students are always expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, polite and safe manner and as such are expected to adhere to the following behavior guidelines:

- Guideline # 1: Show respect for yourself, others, your environment, and all living things.
- Guideline # 2: Demonstrate personal responsibility for your actions, personal and community belongings, and your learning.
- Guideline # 3: Demonstrate self-control. Use your body and words in the kindest manner possible. Be honest.

### Our Disciplinary Philosophy

By providing an environment rich in interesting and creative materials and activities, behavior issues at Clark Fork School are kept to a minimum. We assume children wish to be engaged in a positive, supportive school community.

When children are unable to abide by our agreements to show respect, demonstrate personal responsibility, and demonstrate self-control, resulting in unsafe or disruptive behaviors, teachers, staff, and parents on site have many tools to draw upon in order to assist students. In general these strategies are listed somewhat sequentially, but teachers may choose to adjust the sequence based on what they know of the child's particular needs and/or the previous behavior history of the child in question.

- CFS Code of Conduct: This document, which should be read, discussed, and signed by both parent and child, is the baseline for our discipline strategies.
- Modeling: We assume that all adults will model appropriate, respectful, and safety-conscious behavior in their words and actions during their interactions with one another and with our students.
- Involvement of children in development and implementation of program behavior guidelines: At the beginning of the school year, there is extensive discussion within programs between students and teachers describing behavior expectations. These discussions are designed bring the children ownership in the kind of community we all wish to participate in at Clark Fork School.
- Classroom or whole-school meetings: Sometimes when there is confusion or conflict involving a large number of children, a classroom or whole-school meeting may be called in order to identify the source of the conflict, brainstorm possible solutions, and adopt a standard of behavior.
- Positive reinforcement of desired behaviors: In order to clarify expectations, adults may often compliment a child who is exhibiting the desired behavior aloud and with a specific description. Other children overhearing the compliment will often choose to adopt similar behavior. Example: "Thank you for putting your toys away so neatly, Charlie."

- Verbal reminders of appropriate behavior: Specific descriptions of what behaviors are desired are needed. “Aaron, I need you to put your toys neatly and gently on the shelf where they belong now.”
- Redirecting behavior into appropriate channels by offering children choices, all of which achieve the desired behavior: “Mandy, would you like to play gently with that toy, or would you like to put it away and find something else to do?”
- Release and set your dial: When children become emotionally overwrought, they often cannot participate meaningfully in conflict resolution or make appropriate choices about behavior. Adults are encouraged to help the children become calm and focused by asking them to do a “release” (deep breath and relaxation of body) followed by “set your dial” to the appropriate level for being wholly present (“Please set your dial to a 4 or 5.”)
- Conflict resolution: We wish to equip our students with the tools necessary to resolve conflict in an appropriate manner, including using words to express feelings and viewpoints as “I statements,” attentive listening, and finding consensus in solutions. Sometimes this requires an adult as facilitator, and sometimes the children who have practiced these techniques learn to initiate and conduct such a discussion on their own. The following is a brief outline of the technique that we call “Circle Up.”
  - Gather the offended parties together to one side of on-going activity where they will sit in a circle (all on the same eye level if possible, including adults.)
  - Ask everyone to do a release and set their dials so that they can fully participate in the discussion.
  - One at a time, each person involved is encouraged to explain their feelings and perspective of the problem, using “I statements” and respectful language.
  - Each person must listen without interrupting while the others are speaking.
  - Each person may clarify his/her position if needed.
  - The group is encouraged to brainstorm possible solutions to the conflict.
  - The child (or children) is asked to state what he/she needs to have happen in order to feel taken care of and the others are asked if they can meet that need. This is done for all parties involved.
  - Finally, each participant is asked “Do you feel taken care of?” to be sure that the issue is now closed and that relationships are being mended.
- Take a break: Sometimes a child is unable to make appropriate behavior choices despite all of the strategies listed above. If this occurs, a supervising adult may request that the child “take a break” away from the current activity to give the child time to think about their choices and to adjust their behavior. When the child and adult agree that the child is ready to resume the activity appropriately, the child is welcome to rejoin the group.
- Parent contact: Finally, if none of the strategies above assist the child in joining appropriately in the social and academic environment that best serves the community as a whole, a parent or guardian may be contacted for consultation and assistance.

## Accommodating Children with Special Needs

Clark Fork School is an inclusive community which strives to serve a diverse group of children. We do not offer special education services and not all of our teachers have a background in special education. However, we hire teachers who are interested in working with children in an integrated environment. We promote quality learning for all children and will work collaboratively with families and Missoula County Schools to ensure a successful school experience. All children are eligible to register for placement at Clark Fork School. So long as there are program openings, we accept any child who does not pose a direct threat to others and whose needs we can meet without putting an undue burden on the school or fundamentally altering the program, service, or operation.

For more details on our policy for accommodating children with special needs, please refer to our 2+2+2 policy and agreement or contact the Executive Director.

## Field Trip Procedures

As required by state law, all children attending field trips must have signed consent forms from their parents. Sometimes our children ride buses or walk on field trips, but we also use parent drivers to reach many of our destinations. Parents driving Clark Fork School children on a field trip are responsible for the safety of the children they are transporting, and

- Must have a current valid driver’s license and a safe driving record.
- Carry proof of liability insurance and not allow anyone to drive who is under 18 years of age.

- Lock all car doors while the vehicle is in motion.
- Take a head-count of the children in their care, and check throughout the trip to make sure the children remain with the group.
- Encourage bathroom breaks at appropriate times.
- Keep track of clothing and other items children bring with them.
- Be sensitive to any child who is feeling afraid of a situation or place, and bring this to the teachers' attention.
- Require children to remain calm and act safely while riding in the vehicle and during the field trip.
- Use shoulder-harness seat belts and appropriate car seat restraints for all children in their care; no child may ride in the front seat of a car equipped with an airbag or with a safety restraint unfastened.
- With the exception of public transportation that is not required by law to be equipped with safety restraints, no vehicle may begin moving until all children are seated and secured in age- and weight-appropriate safety restraints, which must remain fastened at all times when the vehicle is in motion. Each child shall have a safety restraint.
- Children shall not share a safety seat or a safety restraint. Any child under 60 pounds or not yet 6 years old may not travel without a booster seat or car seat. If your child uses a car seat or booster seat, please make sure to bring it to school (label it clearly) on field trip days. Any child brought to school on a field trip day without the proper seating restraints will not be allowed to go on the trip and will be sent home.
- Children shall never be left unattended in a vehicle.

Parents will be advised if their child is unruly and disobeys field trip rules. A second infraction may mean exclusion from future field trips or required parental accompaniment.

## Our Neighborhood

Clark Fork School strives to be a good neighbor. We are located in a quiet residential neighborhood, and we ask that you respect those living around us by entering and leaving the school using Rattlesnake Drive rather than Gilbert Street. Our main parking lot is located on Dickinson Street. The small parking lot on Rattlesnake Drive is typically used by teachers and staff. We also ask that you not park in front of our neighbors' houses or turn around in their driveways, and we strongly encourage carpooling or using alternative transportation to reach the school. Mountain Line Bus Route 5 stops directly across the street from Clark Fork School.

Our students enjoy frequent opportunities to visit Pineview Park, located just around the corner from our school. The park offers access to Rattlesnake Creek and the Tom Green Trail, as well as a play structure and covered picnic area. This city park is funded in part through a Special Improvement District tax, but is open to the general public, sports teams, and school children. In a small effort to give back to the neighborhood, we hold a Pineview Park litter pick-up event. We encourage you to join us in this fun and practical service project.

## Attendance

We ask parents to commit to making every effort to have their children attend regularly, barring illness or family emergencies. Should scheduling conflicts arise, parents may discuss with the teachers how their child might best maintain their schooling during extended absences. Clark Fork School classrooms are communities, and as such, everyone benefits most from the regular participation of all who are enrolled.

Students missing instruction and projects or other work given in class will be given brief instructions and materials to work independently and complete said work at home. At the teacher's discretion, this instruction might be given to the student's parent/s as well so that they might provide any necessary guidance to the student. The teacher should not be expected to recreate the entire project due to excessive absences.

Our school day, particularly in the Primary Program, starts promptly at 9:00. Excessive tardiness makes it hard for children to integrate comfortably into their school day and their classroom community and means they miss out on a valuable academic and community building activities. In our preschool classrooms, the morning begins with an Open Explore time. Please remember that this time is a vital part of our program and philosophy. We believe it is important that all children have ample time to explore the classroom freely and engage with their peers and strongly encourage a timely drop off.

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

## Before Care

Clark Fork School offers before-school care from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. every morning of every school day. Additional (earlier) hours may be available if there is enough demand. If you are interested in care prior to 8:00 a.m. please notify the office.

We employ separate caregivers for this program, and children from all age groups participate together. The before care teacher will escort your child to their classroom at the beginning of their school day. Advanced registration is necessary. We adhere to an 8:1 student teacher ratio in our before care program and considerable planning is necessary to provide adequate staffing. To reserve or change regular care or to confirm same-day drop-in care, please contact the office.

## Kids-Niche and Kids-Niche, Jr.

Clark Fork School offers age appropriate after care programs for children preschool-5<sup>th</sup> grade from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. These programs foster a sense of wonder by connecting students to the environment and community through positive outdoor experiences. Our Kids-Niche programs are open to the public and require separate registration. Please contact the office for more information.

## Communication

Teachers are often available to talk with parents at drop off and pick up times each day. Parents are encouraged to let teachers know any information that may affect the child's day at school and teachers will strive to regularly communicate a child's developmental progress and daily activities. Please remember that a teacher's first responsibility is attending to the needs of their students. They may not always be available to talk during school hours.

Clark Fork School staff and teachers will also regularly communicate with parents through written newsletters, emails, blogs, and notes. Each family will receive a weekly 'News and Notes' via email. Each family has a 'Parent Pocket' mailbox that should be checked daily for notes from teachers and office personnel.

Clark Fork School will schedule parent/teacher conference two times a year to discuss a child's development and to set goals. Parents or teachers may at any time request a special conference to discuss concerns, issues, or strategies to work cooperatively to meet a child's individual needs. The Executive Director or a Board Member may be available to join any special parent-teacher conference at the request of the teacher or parent.

We encourage parents to discuss any thoughts or concerns about the school or your child at any time during the year with your child's teacher or the Executive Director. The Executive Director is available to help negotiate any difficulties or differences that may arise between families and/or teachers. In the event a complaint is not resolved with the help of the Executive Director, a written grievance can be filed with the Board of Directors.

## Parent Participation and Expectations

Clark Fork School is a non-profit cooperative school, which means the school is owned and operated by the families currently enrolled. Participation in a cooperative school means becoming part of a community. The core of our school culture revolves around the belief that children do best when the adults in their lives work together. The structure and requirements of a cooperative school experience encourages the supportive and engaged participation of parents and extended family. Lasting friendships happen inside the walls of our school, and not just between the children. Our parents and teachers are a network of support and camaraderie to rely on and look to for advice, solace, and assistance.

Clark Fork School's everyday operations depend on the active involvement of all its families. Each family must provide a minimum of thirty hours of service to the school. Our parent job coordinator and staff are available to help match your skills and availability to the jobs that need to be done to keep the school running. In addition, please watch the weekly newsletter and classroom postings for

one-time jobs needing urgent attention. Teachers can often provide ideas for jobs if you are having trouble fulfilling your minimum hours, and we encourage parents to take the initiative and suggest a task or project they would like to take on to improve the school.

In addition to 30 hours/year of volunteer time, parents asked to meet the following expectations:

- Provide all materials on classroom supply lists
- Donate one bottle of wine (or \$10) to our Wine Raffle
- Donate or solicit an item of \$50 value to our Annual Auction Fundraiser

Clark Fork School encourages all currently enrolled families to participate with active cooperation in decisions affecting the nature of the school's programs, budget and policies. Each family is granted one membership vote.

## Board of Directors

Clark Fork School is governed by a Board of Directors made up of parents and community members charged with insuring the high-quality and efficient operation of Clark Fork School and meeting the goals and obligations set forth by the parent cooperative. The Board of Directors is responsible for the overall direction of the school, including assistance in long-term planning and the goals for programs, staffing and facilities. Board meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. All families are encouraged to attend.

Board Meeting agendas minutes will be emailed to the community. They are also available in hard copy in a notebook located near the main entrance. Announcements for upcoming Board meetings will be made in the 'News and Notes' and by email.

The rules governing our school's operations are spelled out in more detail in our official by-laws. A copy of the by-laws is kept at the school and is available for review. Please refer to the Clark Fork School Directory for the names and contact information of our current Board of Directors.

## Arrivals and Departures

Please do not drop your child off before five minutes prior to the start of the school day (9:00 a.m.), unless you are signed up for before-care. Any children arriving early to their classroom will be escorted to the before care room, and the appropriate charge will be made to the parent's account.

### Parents are asked to sign children in/out each day.

At departure time, *always check in with your child's teacher and your parent pocket for current information.* At the end of the day, children will only be released to:

- Parents
- Those listed on the emergency card.
- Those authorized by the parent for the day. You must notify your child's teacher or the Executive Director of this intent in writing or by leaving a voicemail message.

It is required that anyone picking up your child **bring valid identification**. If the person is unknown to us and they have no identification, we will not release the child. Please note that persons listed on your child's emergency card will have permission to pick up your child without prior notification from you. However, teachers and staff prefer to know in advance to guarantee safety and to help ensure each child is properly prepared.

## Visiting the School

Parents, extended family, and adult family friends are welcome at Clark Fork School, whether as regular classroom helpers, extra helpers on field trips, special guests to share knowledge and skills, or as occasional visitors to observe daily activities at our school. In order to make these visits as successful as possible, we ask that you:

- Arrange the visit in advance with your child's teacher or the director. Classroom space is limited, and certain times of the day are more appropriate for engaging in the children's activities.
- Plan visits carefully for children who are experiencing difficulty separating from parents. Talk in advance with your child's teacher to decide the best time to visit and to plan how to deal with separation issues.
- All visitors must check in at the office. We like to know who's hanging around our kids.

Let us know what skills, knowledge, abilities, and outside connections you might bring to enrich our learning environment. As a parent cooperative, we depend on parents to liven up the classroom and to expose our students to unique and diverse experiences. Please talk with your child's teacher or with the parent jobs coordinator to explore what you might share with our children.

## Complaint/Concern Procedures

As a parent cooperative, we encourage open and frequent communication among parents and teachers. Our parent-teacher board structure recognizes the importance of parent representation, and all meetings are open to the entire parent body. If you have a concern or complaint and direct communications have not been effective, you may contact the director, your classroom representative or another board member for attention. Our formal complaint procedure is outlined in the school's policy manual.

While we believe it is important for you to discuss concerns directly with the party or parties involved, we understand that this approach is not appropriate in every circumstance. If you feel you cannot first discuss the issue with the party or parties involved, please contact the Director or an Executive Board Member. Please be prepared to discuss why you felt a direct approach was not appropriate. Additionally, you may file a formal complaint with the Director, asking that your identity be kept confidential. Confidentiality may not be possible should your complaint prove to be difficult to resolve, or should you decide to pursue the matter further.

## Admission, Tuition and Fees

### Enrollment

Clark Fork School enrolls children ages 2 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Prior to admission, parents are required to complete necessary forms, including:

- Emergency Contact Information and Parental Consent Form
- Immunization records (must have current and up-to-date immunizations)
- Contract
- Code of Conduct
- 2+2+2 Agreement
- Last page of this handbook, signed and dated.

Your child will be unable to attend school until all of these requirements are met.

Parents are reminded to keep their child's health and emergency contact information updated throughout the year as needed.

### Tuition and Fees

#### Supply Fees

Parents are required to pay an annual classroom supply fee to be included in each classroom's individual supply budget. This money will be used to purchase supplies for classroom activities and for field trip and transportation costs. The supply fee will be added to the first month's invoice, unless otherwise arranged with the director.

## Parent Hours

It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the parent job coordinator to obtain a volunteer position and to report parent hours in writing or online at the end of every month. Parents have the option of a parent hour “buy-out,” and can choose to add a \$500 charge to their account in lieu of completing the required 30 parent hours during the school year. Please contact the office if you would like information on the Parent Volunteer Hour Opt Out Form. Parents who have reported less than 50% of their required parent hours by the end of January will be assessed a \$500 charge on their February invoices. The fee may be reduced to reflect partial completion of hours.

## Tuition

Tuition is due at the beginning of each month. For your convenience, we will email you your statement at the beginning of the month. Please review it carefully and contact the Executive Director with any questions. Payment is due immediately, and is considered late after 1:00 p.m. on the 8th day of the month. Late payments are assessed a \$15 penalty. If timely payment is a problem, please contact the director immediately to work out a mutually agreeable payment plan. Please refer to your contract for details on the various penalty provisions that may apply to delinquent accounts.

If you wish to change your child’s program attendance, you must notify the Director in writing by the 25th day of the prior month to ensure timely tuition billing adjustments. Adding days or hours of attendance is contingent on space available in the program.

Limited financial assistance is available to families enrolled at Clark Fork School based on income eligibility and special family circumstances. The scholarship committee makes application packets available each spring and awards scholarships for the following school year early in the summer. Working parents may also be eligible for state-assisted childcare payments, as Clark Fork School is an approved childcare facility under state certification guidelines. For information and state-pay application procedures, contact Child Care Resources, 728-6446.

## Late Pickup Policy

All Clark Fork School programs begin at 9:00 a.m and are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. A late fee of \$5 will be added if a student is picked up more than five (5) minutes past dismissal and \$1 per minute for every additional minute.

## School Closures

In deference to our children’s safety, Clark Fork School will be closed when severe winter weather forces the closure or early dismissal of schools in Missoula Public School District One. You may learn of such closures and early dismissals by tuning into local radio stations. If you learn of an early dismissal, please arrange to have your child picked up as soon as possible.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality of those enrolled at Clark Fork School will be upheld at all times. Children’s enrollment, assessment and medical information will be kept in a locked file with access restricted to Clark Fork School teachers, staff, and licensing officials.

## Non-Discrimination

Clark Fork School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination: No individual shall be discriminated against with regard to compensation, terms, conditions, or other privileges of employment or admission because of race, ancestry, color, handicap, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, creed, physical condition, political belief, public assistance status, or sexual orientation.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Sick-Child Procedures

The health and safety of all Clark Fork School children is our top priority, so we strictly follow the sickness exclusion policy developed by the Montana Department of Public Health. If you need to go to work when your child is excluded from school, we suggest you contact Cuddles and Care (327-3050), a sick-child care service of St. Patrick Hospital.

If your child comes to school with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness, he or she will be required to go home immediately. Please do not bring your child to school if he or she shows any of the following symptoms:

- Fevers of 100.5°F (oral) or greater. Children should be without fever for 24 hours before returning to school. Thus, a fever one afternoon means no school the next morning, even if your child appears to feel fine.
- Vomiting or diarrhea (loose, watery stools more than 6 times in 24 hours). Children should not return until symptoms have subsided for 24 hours. Again, if your child has these symptoms one afternoon, he or she may not attend school the following day.
- Bacterial infections, including strep throat, scarlet fever, and other skin infections (draining burns and sores that cannot be covered), until they have been treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours. Bacterial conjunctivitis, “pinkeye,” (symptoms include reddened eyes with a colored pus discharge) deserves a special note. Pinkeye may also be caused by a virus, which usually has a less severe drainage. Both types of pinkeye (bacterial and viral) are extremely contagious. It is sometimes difficult to determine the cause of infection. Doctors will usually prescribe antibiotic eye drops and instruct parents to return their child to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment. However, this has not always ceased the spread of pinkeye since a viral pinkeye has an incubation period of 3-5 days and antibiotic drops do not halt the virus. If the school has a pinkeye outbreak and your child has been diagnosed with pinkeye, you may be asked to keep your child home for 3 days. Please teach your child the importance of good hand washing. This is the main defense in preventing pinkeye.
- Generalized rashes over multiple parts of the body, until they have been diagnosed by a doctor. Varicella (chicken pox) warrants exclusion until the sores dry up, usually 5-7 days.
- Head lice, scabies, ringworm, impetigo, or any other external body parasite, until treated.
- Thick green or yellow nasal discharge persisting longer than 3 days if accompanied by fever, persistent cough, eye drainage, or ear pain. Consult with your health care provider before returning your child to school.
- Jaundice or symptoms of severe illness such as breathing difficulty, uncontrolled coughing, or seizure.
- Any illness or injury that does not allow your child to participate in the usual activities or requires extra care.

If your child becomes sick while at school or if the child is suspected of having a communicable illness, the staff will separate him or her from the other children and contact you or your emergency contact for immediate pick-up. Please pick up your child within one hour of the call, using our main phone number to contact the office and notify them of your plans. In the case of a serious injury, we will notify parents immediately and will call 911 for treatment.

We appreciate your letting us know if your child is sick and will not be attending school, particularly if he or she has a contagious illness. Please use our regular school telephone number to leave this message. In the case of any communicable disease or condition identified among Clark Fork School students, the Director will post signs and distribute written information describing the nature of the condition, symptoms to watch for, and precautions to take.

## Immunizations

As a licensed child care center, Clark Fork School is required to keep records of all our children’s immunization histories, and all enrolled children at all grade levels must be fully immunized in accordance with Montana law.

## First Aid Policy

The safety of our students is our first goal. A prompt and effective response to any emergency situation will be followed by all staff members. Training in emergency response and procedures will be mandatory for all staff and we will teach children how to respond quickly and safely when directed by caregivers.

This policy was developed because emergency situations can happen anywhere, at any time, to anyone and because a calm and orderly response to an emergency can prevent further harm to all involved. This policy was developed to prepare staff and children for medical, environmental, and all other types of emergencies. Our First Aid Policy includes the following:

- All staff are trained in Pediatric First Aid and CPR
- There is a First Aid kit in each classroom that is checked monthly and restocked with contents prescribed by licensing and the American Red Cross. An Emergency First Aid kit is taken on all field trips outside our facility.

- Emergency contact information for each child is maintained in the child's file in the office. Each classroom also has a copy of their students' information and it is taken with the Emergency First Aid kit on all field trips.
- Emergency phone numbers are posted by each phone. This includes, Poison Control, 911, police, fire, and closest Emergency Room number.
- A disaster plan for environmental emergencies with an evacuation plan is on file in the director's office and is posted near the exit of all the classrooms.
- A report will be made to the Child Care Licensing office within 24 hours of any injury or illness requiring hospitalization, emergency transport or treatment of a child, and of any environmental emergency including, but not limited to fire. A copy of any such report will be given to the parents and a copy will be on file in the office.

This policy applies to all staff, children, and volunteers at Clark Fork School.

## Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring the complete evacuation of Clark Fork School (e.g. fire, broken gas main, winter power outage), children will be taken to Rattlesnake School, located a few blocks north of Clark Fork School at 1220 Pineview Drive. Teachers will call parents' daytime phone numbers as listed on the children's emergency contact cards, and children should be picked up as soon as possible.

In the case of any unusual national or local emergency, please pick up your child at Clark Fork School or call the school for further information.

## Medication Administration Policy

This medication policy was developed so that medications will be administered in a safe and expedient manner that protects children and staff. Administering medication is based on parent consent and the child's health care provider recommendations.

We believe children should be given medication, when needed, in the safest possible way for the child, parent, and providers. Since most children attend six hours or less a day, most over-the-counter medications can be given by the parent before and after school. We encourage parents to time dosages so that bringing medicine to school is not necessary. However, CFS teachers will administer medication when it is medically necessary when the parent's work schedule prevents them from giving it.

Clark Fork School does not provide or stock any medications. All medications administered at CFS will be provided by the parent for their own child. If a student must be given medication, the following policies will be adhered to:

- Non-prescription or prescription medication will ONLY be administered when we have the parent's signed consent and a health care provider's prescription or written recommendation that a specific medicine is given to a specific child. If the parent(s) refuse to sign or fail to provide the health care provider's prescription or recommendation, the medication will not be administered.
- A medication log sheet will be kept in each child's chart where a parental signature is required each time a medication is needed. The staff person administering the medication will immediately record the date, time, medication, and dose and sign his/her name on the medication log. Medication logs are part of the child's personal health history.
- Prescription medication must be in the original child-proof container labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name of the medication, the date the prescription was filled, the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, the medication's expiration date, and the administration, storage, and disposal instructions. Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications must also be in their original child-proof container labeled with the child's first and last name, specific legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer, and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication.
- Only staff trained in medication administration will give medication.
- A health care provider may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency situation, or chronic condition. The instructions for such a medication must include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dose of the medication, how often the medication may be given, the conditions for use, and any precautions to follow.

- Medications will be stored at the recommended temperature, in a child proof container, in a place inaccessible to children. Medication will be administered in the area where it is stored.
- Expired medication will be disposed of in the recommended manner.

This policy applies to all children, parents, guardians, and providers.

Parents will be notified if their child suffers any side effects from medication, or if a medication error or incident occurred. A medication error/incident report will be completed by the staff person administering medication and co-signed by the director. In the event of an adverse effect or serious allergic reaction, staff will call (EMS) 911 if the child is in distress.

## Food Allergy Precautions

If your child has a food or other severe allergy, please make a note on your health form and make sure the teachers are aware of the condition. Parents of these students are responsible for educating staff members and parents about necessary precautions. We ask all families to respect these guidelines.

## Child Abuse Neglect Policy and Reporting

In all 50 states “mandated reporting laws” exist for certain individuals who work with children. Child care providers, preschool and school teachers, social workers, and health professionals are among those who are required by law to report any suspected case of abuse or neglect.



**CLARK FORK SCHOOL  
Field Trip Permission Form  
2013-2014 School year**

I, the undersigned, give my permission for my child to participate in field trips while enrolled at Clark Fork School. I have read and understand the Field Trip Procedures policy in the Student and Family Handbook, and I am aware that transportation for these field trips may include walking, bus trips, or riding in the cars of Clark Fork parents and/or staff. Clark Fork School will provide advance notice of all field trips.

Child(ren)'s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name (s) ((Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Receipt of Student and Family Handbook**

I acknowledge having received a copy of the Clark Fork School Student and Family Handbook (revised July 2013) and my obligation to read and become familiar with its contents.

Parent or Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_