VENTURES SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM

Parent Handbook

Policies and Procedures

UPDATED JULY 2019

Ventures Information
Location: Baranof School Room 17
Phone Number: 966-1317
Mailing Address: Ventures
305 Baranof St
Sitka, AK 99835
Supervisor: Marjean Ragsdale, M. Ed.

Hours of Operation:
1:00PM-6:00PM Regular School Day
School Closure & Summer Hours: 7:30am-6:00pm

Days of Operation:
Monday - Friday

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About Ventures
Ventures is a childcare program for ages 5 to 12. We are licensed through the Child Care Program Office for the Alaska Department of Health for up to seventy (70) students. Children who attend Ventures have the opportunity to participate in many learning experiences, projects, and outdoor activities. We incorporate the STEAM program which stands for Science, Technology, Art, and Math.

All teachers are required to have 24 hours of training per year and a minimum of basic first aid and CPR.

Program Goals
The Ventures Program staff strives to:
1. Provide a positive, safe, academic, supportive, friendly, and playful environment for children.
2. Encourage children to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and demonstrate respect for others.
3. Keep fee at the lowest possible rate need to operate a high-quality, self-sufficient program.

What Parents Need to Know
1. Please read this parent handbook carefully as it contains information with which you should be familiar.
2. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis.
3. Complete and return registration form and up to date immunization records at Ventures. Ventures is not able to request a copy of immunization records from the school.
4. Submit your non-refundable registration fee of $20 to Ventures at time of registration or on the first bill. (Fee charged for summer and/or fall sessions once only).
5. Parents must sign their children in and out each day and then initial the attendance sheet.
6. It is important that we have your address, home and work phone numbers, place of employment, and information regarding persons authorized to pick up your children from Ventures. This information is all requested in your registration packet. License requires records must be updated every 6 months.
7. Valuables, toys, and irreplaceable possessions should be left at home. Ventures is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
8. Our license requires that children have 30 minutes of physical activity for every 3 hours of care. Ventures will play outside in all weather conditions, except when temperatures are under 22 degrees or extreme rain. Please provide appropriate clothing for your child. Please label items.
9. If a child has not attended Ventures in over 90 days parents must re-register their children.
10. Parents will be notified in writing and provided a copy of any policies that have been changed or updated, within 30 days.

Daily Activities Monday – Thursday—School Year
1:40PM  Kinders arrive—Group Time
2:00 PM  Exploration
2:20 PM  Kinder bus riders leave to catch the bus
2:25 PM  1st Grade Arrives—Exploration
2:50 PM  2nd–5th Grade Arrive
           Recess
3:35 PM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES PROGRAM
3:50 PM  Daily Themed Activity and homework time
4:45 PM  Exploration
5:05 PM  HOME SNACK PROVIDED BY PARENTS
6:00 PM  End of day

Daily Schedule Friday—School Year
1:10 PM  Kinders arrive—Group Time
1:20 PM  Kinder bus riders leave to catch the bus
1:25 PM  1st grade arrives—Exploration
1:50 PM  2nd–5th grade arrive
           Recess
2:30 PM  Daily Themed Activity or Movie (alternate weeks)
3:30 PM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES
4:00 PM  Exploration
5:05 PM  HOME SNACK PROVIDED BY PARENTS
6:00 PM  End of day

**Daily Schedule- School Closure Days**
7:30 AM  Student drop off (students MUST be brought to the door by a parent or guardian)
9:15 AM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES
9:30 AM  Recess
10:15 AM  Group activities—age group rotation
12:00 PM  Lunch provided by parents
12:45 PM  Recess
1:45 PM  Daily/Weekly themed activity
3:00 PM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES
3:15 PM  Recess
3:45 PM  Exploration
5:05 PM  HOME SNACK PROVIDED BY PARENTS
6:00 PM  End of day

**Summer Program**
7:30 AM  Exploration—drop off time
9:15 AM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES
9:30 AM  Recess
10:15 AM  Group activities—age group rotation
12:00 PM  Sack Lunch provided by parents
12:45 PM  Recess
1:30 PM  Group activities
3:00 PM  SNACK PROVIDED BY VENTURES
3:15 PM  Recess
3:45 PM  Exploration and/or outside or gym
5:00 PM  HOME SNACK PROVIDED BY PARENTS
6:00 PM  End of day

**Personal Items**
We ask that children do not bring personal items such as toys, makeup, money, fidget spinners, and so forth as these items become a distraction and/or can become lost, damaged, or stolen.

**Billing and fees**
1. Fees are determined by the number of days per week registered. The monthly rate is figured on the average school days per month that Ventures is open.
2. Fees are charged according to package price you registered for, unless your child attends more. If something changes, please let us know. Check the fee schedule for specific costs.
3. Payment is due by the 15th of each month.
4. Fees cover the cost of staff, snacks, materials, bus transportation, field trips, staff trainings, and other activities.
5. All children MUST be picked up by 6:00PM or designated closure time for that specific day. A late fee of $25 will be charged. A further fee of $10.00 will be charged for every 15 minutes. For example: child is picked up at 6:18PM then the fee is $35.00.
6. Two weeks written notice is required if you are withdrawing your child and would like to have your bill pro-rated.
7. Bills not paid in full—Parent/guardian of student will be given 30 days to pay the remaining balance on their account. If the bill is not paid within the 30 days then your student will no longer be able to attend Ventures until the bill is paid in full.

**Illness and Emergencies**
1. Children who are ill (runny nose, continuous cough, red-sore throat, undiagnosed rash, swollen glands, pink eye, head or stomach ache, flu head lice, etc.) or have had a fever within the past 24 hours should not attend Ventures.
2. If your child is sick, you will be notified and requested to pick your child up.
3. Please send a note with your child if they are not permitted to go outside or participate in physical activity.
4. Children who have head lice will not be allowed to attend Ventures until there are no live lice.

5. In case of an emergency, as determined by the Ventures supervisor, paramedics will be called and parents will be notified immediately. Parents will be responsible for all costs incurred in such an emergency.

6. Only Physician-prescribed medication, in the original container will be administered at Ventures. The container must be labeled by the pharmacist to include the child’s name, expiration date, dosage, and name of medication. Information on prescription drugs must be completed by the parent/guardian and attending physician and be on file at Ventures before it can be given. Forms can be found at Ventures and with each school’s secretary.

**Safety Issues**

1. Ventures will conduct monthly fire drills. All children will participate in the fire drills. Parents will be notified if their child does not participate.

2. Children will walk in the hallways.

3. Children’s records must be update quarterly.

4. If a child leaves a Ventures group, the police will be called immediately. Parents will also be contacted.

**Tsunami Evacuation Procedures**

Sitka High School is an evacuation site. It was chosen because it is on high ground in the event of a tsunami and to provide a central location where parents may come to get their children. Children whose parents cannot come to the evacuation area to get their child will be kept in the custody of school officials.

- Notify Staff When Taking Your Child in Such an Event

**Confidentiality**

Individual’s records are confidential, but information is shared when necessary with the Ventures’s staff, licensing representatives, classroom teachers, and the child protective service agency.

**Staff Supervision of Children**

1. Staff note when children arrive and leave.

2. Postings of group activities, where, time left, and return.

3. Children are supervised according to age, ability and needs.

4. Staff ratio is 1:14 for grade K-1st and 1:18 for 2nd through 5th.

5. Children are never left unattended.

6. Children are supervised in classrooms and outside.

**OCS Community Care Licensing**

Ventures staff are mandated reporters, required to contact OCS in the event of suspecting child abuse or neglect. If you, as a parent, have concerns related to our facility, please contact the Ventures Director at 966-1317 immediately or childcare licensing directly at (907) 465-4765.

**Special Needs**

A copy of the student’s IEP needs to be on file with Ventures. A plan of care will be developed by parent and Ventures’s Director.

**Parent Participation**

Parent participation is very WELCOME during any program throughout any day. Parents are always welcome to attend any special events and field trips.

**Volunteers and Substitutes**

All substitute teachers are employed by the Sitka School District. Volunteers are vetted and assessed for teaching skills and will replace staff only in the areas where they are more skilled.
Field Trips
- Special Field trips will be posted 3 days in advance. Occasionally, special trips are offered without the 3 day luxury.
- Ventures staff apologize for any inconvenience. Notification of participation or nonparticipation is necessary for staffing ratio and therefore, children need to be signed up in advance.
- Transportation will either be walking or bus (bus notification will be given 3 days in advance and provided by the local bus company).
- Weather may affect whether field trip will occur, especially when walking.

People Powered Transportation
Children will be allowed to bring their people-powered transportation to Ventures on Fridays during the summer. This includes bikes, scooters, roller blades, etc. These vehicles will be allowed on the playground area ONLY. Children will also be able to take bikes on special biking field trips.
1. Children MUST WEAR HELMETS and appropriate safety padding.
2. Children will not be allowed to share transportation, even with siblings.

Videos and Computers
1. Videos are used to enhance thematic activities.
2. All videos will be age appropriate.
3. Television and movie viewing, video games and computer use is limited to 90 minutes per day.

Daily Snacks
Snacks are provided by Ventures. Children can bring an extra snack, if needed to be eaten at home snack.

Behavior Rules and Policies
Ventures strives to create the optimum conditions for students by offering an engaging, developmentally appropriate experience by providing supports such as adequate structure, clear expectations, and positive reinforcement.

If your child(ren):
1. refuses to follow the behavior guidelines and program rules,
2. leaves the group without permission, or
3. is disruptive to the overall program environment, which interferes with the beneficial use and enjoyment by students and staff,

staff will document the behavior in log and notify parents.

If the behavior(s) reoccur five or more times within a two week period, the team (parents and Ventures staff) will meet to find strategies.

If after a month, the strategies do not work, the team will meet again to set up and implement a behavior plan, if necessary with Youth Advocates of Sitka or Sitka Counseling and Prevention if the child(ren) attends such program.

If the behavior continues and/or does not respond to interventions, a temporary suspension may need to take place until such time as the team feels the child can return.

Suspension and Dismissal
Ventures has a zero tolerance policy on fighting. A child will be suspended for the day if they engage in physical fighting.

A student may be permanently dismissed from the Ventures Program if his/her actions have demonstrated a continued inability to follow the
behavior guidelines and program rules, and/or has created a risk of injury to him/herself, or to others.

The Ventures Director reserves the absolute right to dismiss a student without refund for any behavior where:

1. the child threatens or endangers the welfare and/or safety of ANY student, staff, volunteer, or any person involved with the program.
2. the child steals or damages Sitka Schools property, Ventures property, and/or the property of others.

Ventures Closings
Ventures will post and notify parents on days we plan to close. We will make every effort to inform parents of emergency closure as soon as possible.

If school is cancelled or dismissed early due to weather, Ventures will be closed.
If a power outage lasting more than 30 minutes occurs, Ventures will be closed. Parents will be called and asked to pick up their child immediately.

DATES CLOSED FOR VENTURES 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR

- July 4, 2019 (Fourth of July)
- August 20-21, 2019 (Training & Preparation for school year)
- September 2, 2019 (Labor Day)
- October 18, 2019 (Alaska Day)
- November 28-29, 2019 (Thanksgiving)
- December 24 & 25, 2019 (Christmas Eve & Day)
- January 1, 2020 (New Year’s Day)
- January 20, 2020 (Martin Luther King Day)
- May 25, 2020 (Memorial Day)
- May 22 & 26, 2020 (Training & Preparation for Summer)

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR THAT VENTURES WILL BE OPENED 7:30 – 6:00
full days open, separate billing from regular fees)

- September 27, 2019
- October 25, 2019
- October 31 – November 1, 2019
- November 11, 2019
- December 23, 2019 – January 8, 2020 (Winter Break)
- February 21, 2020
- February 27 - 28, 2020
- March 16 – 20, 2020 (Spring Break)
- April 24, 2020

LAST DAY OF VENTURES PROGRAM FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR
May 21, 2020

START FOR SUMMER PROGRAM 2020
May 27, 2020
State of Alaska Child Care Program Office
Child Care Licensing- Parents Guide to Licensed Child Care (Rev. 2/10/2009) Page 1 of 2

PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE
Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions, and carefully compare several programs.

Licensed care includes child care homes, group homes, and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

Licensing is a key to quality child care.

Licensing promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center, group home, or home is granted a child care license, it must meet minimum health, safety, and program requirements (see summary below). A licensing representative from the Department of Health and Social Services visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child’s care. Licensors generally visit once a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether the child care program meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s care,

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact your local licensing office. The Child Care Program Office will investigate your complaint. Your local licensing office address and phone number is:

HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY HOMES, GROUP HOMES, AND CENTERS CARE FOR?
(Children under the age of 13, including children related to caregivers under the age of 12)

CHILD CARE HOMES
No more than 8 children total under age 13, including caregiver’s own children under age 12
No more than 5 children without Fire Marshal approval
No more than 3 children under 36 months
No more than 2 non-ambulatory children
At least 1 adult caregiver
No more than 5 children in nighttime care including caregiver’s own children under age 18

CHILD CARE GROUP HOMES
No more than 12 children total under age 13
SUMMARY OF STATE CHILD CARE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS
PARENTS
- Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child, and update it at least semi-annually
- Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- Receive written child care policies

LICENSEE
- Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregiver) are in care
- License must be renewed every 2 years
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is assessed before a license is issued
- Complaints are investigated
- Licensing files are open to public review

CAREGIVERS
- Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- May not have a physical, behavioral, or domestic violence problem that poses a significant risk to children in care
- Administrators, caregivers of a facility, and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must have a valid criminal history check that is conducted by the State of Alaska Background Check Unit.
- Administrators, caregivers of a facility, and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must be fingerprinted
- Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times

SAFETY
- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregiver with First Aid and CPR training is always present
- Facility is free of hazards inside and out
- Medicine and toxic materials are labeled and stored safely out of reach
- Firearms and ammunition are prohibited in a child care center. Firearms and ammunition must be stored as required in regulation for a child care home and group home
- Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child
- Facility must meet specific requirements for transporting children

HEALTH
- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or have a valid exemption
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- Facility must meet regulations if caring for mildly ill children
- Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance
- Drinking water is safe
- Smoking is not allowed
- Medicine is given only with parent permission
- Food preparation and handling are sanitary

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
- Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Infant walkers are not allowed
- Toys are adequate and varied
- Children have storage space for their belongings
- Children under age 5 must have a cot/mat/bed and bedding that is clean and sanitary for resting
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that could increase the risk of suffocation

PROGRAM
- Promotes children's healthy development
- Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours facility is open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- TV, movie viewing and computer and video game playing are limited to children's programs and do not exceed 1½ hours in a 24-hour period
- Computer learning activities do not exceed 2 hours a day
- High risk activities are not allowed
- Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE
- Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- Sets realistic expectations and clear and consistent limits
- Is not related to eating, sleeping, or toileting
- Child may not be removed from other children for more than 10 minutes
- Corporal punishment of children in care is not allowed. (Corporal punishment means "the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, punching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.")

FIRE SAFETY
- Facility meets fire safety standards
- Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented