

Hardy Afterschool Parent Handbook 2011-2012

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Statement of Purpose

The Hardy After-School Program (HASP) serves the Hardy community by providing a safe, comfortable, supervised after-school environment for children in the kindergarten through fifth grades. The Program promotes individual self-esteem and provides opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and creative learning experiences. Well-educated staff interact positively with the children and accommodate the needs of all participants. The Program offers age-specific and mixed-group programming, cultural sensitivity, and mutual respect between the children and staff. Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged.

HASP operates under the auspices of the Arlington Public School system and follows school committee policies. HASP does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status.

Philosophy

The Hardy After-School is committed to creating a safe, comfortable and creative environment for the students to experience each other and their community. A large part of our program's strength is based in our integration with the Hardy Elementary School curriculum and community. The Program's philosophy is designed to be consistent with the Hardy School Mission Statement and Core Values, and includes the following elements:

- ❖ Staff and programming that model mutual respect, tolerance, cooperation, and conflict resolution;
- ❖ Developmentally-appropriate activities in a nurturing and culturally sensitive environment;
- ❖ A variety of recreation, enrichment and creative learning activities for different interests;
- ❖ Time for indoor and outdoor play as well as homework assistance;
- ❖ Regular communications among HASP teachers, the Hardy School principal and teachers, and parents.

Enrollment

Registration Procedure: To register, an application must be filled out and submitted. A non-refundable registration fee in the amount of \$130.00 per family must accompany the application form. \$100 of the fee will be applied towards the first month tuition.

Acceptance and Waiting List: Hardy After-School Program (HASP) serves up to 100 children each afternoon. In an effort to make enrollment as fair as possible we have considered several factors in determining our new policies. The parent board and director with the principal's support have decided to save some slots for incoming kindergarteners, and then give priority to returning families and siblings. Considering those factors we will be instituting the following policy in enrolling children into the Hardy After-School Program.

- 1) All applications must be in by June 1st. Any application not in by the deadline will be put on the end of the waitlist in the order they were received. They will not be included in any of the initial lotteries for placing children into the program. Which means all applications in by the deadline will have priority over applications that are received after the deadline.
- 2) The new non-refundable registration fee will be \$130 - \$100 of which will be applied towards the first month's tuition. However if you cannot be enrolled due to lack of space you will be refunded \$100.
- 3) There will be 20 of the 100 slots reserved for incoming kindergarteners.
- 4) The highest priority will be given to families with incoming kindergarteners who already have a sibling enrolled in the program. Those families will be put into the slots they need.
- 5) The next group will be the kindergartners without siblings. All kindergarten applicants will be randomly given a number. They will then be entered into the remaining kindergarten slots in order of their number until all 20 are filled.
- 6) The next group will be the prior year students. They will all be randomly given a number and then entered into the remaining slots (if all kindergarten applications are entered and there are slots remaining

those will open to returning families). Families with more than one student will be given one number for all the children.

- 7) After all the prior year students are entered or all the slots are filled, all of the remaining families (new families and in coming kindergarteners) will be randomly given a number that falls after the prior year students numbers. They will either be filled into the slots or put on a wait list in order of their number. The applicants with late applications will be put on the wait list after all the on time applicants.

As we fill the slots people will be given slots that are available. If the slots requested are not available we will call the family and have them decide what they would like to do. For example Billy Smith asked for Mon, Wed, and Fri, Wednesday was not available so a call is made to the parents and they decide to change to Mon, Tues, and Fri since those slots are still open.

Tuition Costs: The tuition rate is \$75/day/month. If a child does not regularly attend HASP on the day of early release and the child attends, the charge will be \$25. Parents may sign children up for individual days as long as there is available space. The charge for these days is \$25. Parents must sign their children up for days with no school (full day) on the sign up sheet at HASP. The charge will be \$60 for full-day coverage.

Days per week	1	2	3	4	5
Cost per month	\$75	\$150	\$225	\$300	\$375

Financial Assistance: The HASP provides tuition assistance for families who need help paying tuition. Contact the HASP Director for an application and further information.

Billing Procedure: Tuition will be billed based on the number of days your child is enrolled. HASP uses a level billing system, i.e. parents will be billed the same amount each month. These bills are calculated based on the number of school days divided into ten monthly tuition periods, September through June.

- On or about the 22nd of each month, HASP families will receive a bill for the following month. Each payment is due on the first of each month. Adjustments to the monthly bill as a result of approved schedule changes will be reflected in the next month's billing cycle.

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- Vacations/holidays, and early-release days will be billed separately and are not included in the regular monthly bill. The previous month's additional fees will be included in the following month's bill for the vacation/holidays attended.
- Tuition payment is required for all days a child is enrolled. Since the program bases its tuition fees on actual costs, tuition is required whether a child is absent or not.

Late Payments: Payments received 15 or more business days after the 1st of the month are subject to a late fee of \$25.

Non-Payment: If two months tuition is unpaid enrollment of the child may be terminated. When tuition is repaid the child may be re-enrolled. If there is a waiting list the child, or children, will be put on the waiting list when payment is received in full.

Returned Checks: To cover the cost of a check returned for any reason, there will be a charge of \$25.00.

Program Hours:

- The Hardy After-School Program routinely begins at approximately 2:15 PM and ends at 6:00 PM.
- For early-release days, the program hours are from the release of school to 6:00 PM.
- For full days (selected vacation days), the hours are 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

School Vacations/Early-Release Days: The Hardy After-School Program is closed whenever the Arlington Public Schools are closed. HASP will offer extended care on early-release days, and selected vacation days, subject to parental demand and staff availability. The calendar will be available in mid September. The charge for these days is \$60.

Scheduling Changes:

- Change in Schedule Form: All the following changes should be submitted on a Change in Schedule Form.
- To Drop Days: To reduce the number of days, submit a written request to the Director, including the days you wish to drop, and the effective date. We require 30 days advance notice.
- To Add/Change Days: Days may be added/changed at any time, provided space is available. The parent(s) should submit a written request to the Director, including the days you wish to add, or the days you wish to change, and the effective date. We require 30 days advance notice.
- To Withdraw from the Program: To withdraw your child from the program, notify the Director in writing 30 days in advance. (Families who leave without 30 days written notice are responsible for two weeks' tuition for the time period following the date of withdrawal.)

Snow Day Policy: HASP is closed whenever the Arlington Public Schools are closed. If Arlington Public Schools are delayed the After-School will operate as normal.

Pick-up Policy: Pick-up will be through the side door (by the gym). Parking should be done on the street or in the parking lot at the side of the school. There are children playing in the playground so please drive slowly and **do not park next to the curb by the after-school door**. You must stop by the office and get a pick-up pass to collect your child.

Late Pick-up: If an emergency arises, and you know you will be late in picking up your child, please call the program and inform us. The late fee is \$1 dollar for each minute after a five minute grace period (6:05PM). The late fee will be due upon pick-up. The fee will be calculated using the school clock. The late fee applies to each family, so if you have two children you only pay one late fee.

If parents have not contacted us and 15 minutes have elapsed since program closing time, we will begin calling people on the child's information form.

Health and Safety

Health Policy: Your child's health is a matter of importance to all of us. A health form signed by a physician must be kept on file in the school for each child in the program. If your child is ill and absent from school, that child may not attend after-school that afternoon.

While HASP is not equipped to look after sick children, we understand that parents rely on the program to provide care on a regular basis and cannot stay home with their child for each and every sniffle. HASP always tries to balance these conflicting needs and asks you to do so also. If a child is not well, please make every effort to keep him or her at home, as illnesses spread rapidly in spite of everyone's best efforts. We ask that you keep your child at home if he or she exhibits the following signs or symptoms:

- A fever over 101 degrees within 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours.
- Early stages of a cold.
- Sore throat or swollen glands
- Undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
- Earache or drainage from the eyes.
- Head lice or scabies, until properly treated and all nits removed.

Emergency Procedures

When children become ill at HASP: In the case of mild illness, the child's parent or guardian will be contacted, and medication administered with permission from the parent or guardian in a manner consistent with the medication policy described below. The child will be made comfortable, isolated as much as possible from the other children, and closely watched until a parent or guardian arrives to pick him or her up.

If a child becomes seriously ill while at HASP, a parent or guardian will be asked to pick up the child immediately; the child's pediatrician may also be contacted if the situation warrants. If a parent or guardian is not directly reachable, attempts will be made to contact them through the emergency contacts listed on the emergency medical form; if a parent or guardian cannot be reached, one of the emergency contacts may be asked to pick up the child. In extreme

circumstances, an ambulance may be called, or a child may be taken to an emergency center or hospital in the care of a staff member.

Accidents: Accident procedures followed by HASP staff will depend on the severity of the injury. In the case of a minor injury (cuts, bruises, etc.) simple first-aid will be applied immediately and the parent or guardian notified, in no case later than pick-up time the same day. For more severe injuries, parent or guardian and the child's pediatrician will be called right away. If parent(s) or guardian(s) cannot be reached right away, an emergency contact person will be called and asked to arrange for the child to be taken to the doctor if this seems advisable. If the accident is very serious, the Arlington Fire Department will be contacted and asked to provide emergency care for the child; simultaneously, HASP staff will call both the parent/guardian and the child's pediatrician to arrange for the child to be met and treated at the hospital.

In all cases of accident, an accident report will be completed and a copy given to the parent or guardian; a copy will also be kept on file at HASP.

Medication: In accordance with state regulations, *prescription drugs* can only be administered to children by the HASP staff if:

- The medication is a current prescription;
- The medication is in an original container with child's name, date, name of the medicine, dosage, and special instructions clearly marked;
- There is a written request from the child's parent or guardian with instructions as to dosage and dosage times.

Non-prescription drugs, in an original container and not out of date, can be administered by HASP staff only with written instructions, including dosage, from a physician. In special cases, such as bronchial inhalers for asthmatic children or a diabetic pump, the child may be permitted to administer his/her own medication with staff supervision; written instructions from the physician and written consent from the parent or guardian are required.

Non-prescription topical creams, ointments, and sprays, such as sunscreen and insect repellent, can be administered by HASP staff with written permission and instructions from the parent or guardian. Each item must be clearly labeled with the child's name. During summer camp, camp provided sunscreen will be administered unless a sunscreen is provided by the parents.

Further details of HASP's health and emergency policies, including staff responsibilities for emergency and preventive health measures, are available for your review upon request. The prescription and non-prescription forms can be found on our website.

Discipline Policy

At HASP we expect children to respect each other, staff, parents and our physical environment. We believe that children should receive positive reinforcement for good behavior. However children, as all people, are not perfect. Therefore, our preferred method for dealing with repeated infractions is a "time out." We begin by giving a reminder of the expected behavior. If this reminder does not stop the behavior we will use a "time out." This gives the child time to compose him/herself and think about what he/she has done. The length of the "time out" is appropriate for the child's developmental level. The children are usually expected to recount why they are on "time out" before joining the activity again.

A child who needs more than the "time out" method shall be isolated from the group. The teacher will talk to the child to be certain that the child understands what is expected of him/her and to allow the child to verbalize feelings. Should the child need more, the teacher will notify the Director, who will make determination at that time regarding further action and involvement of the parents.

We at HASP believe that a child who is active, happy, and interested in a safe and caring environment will not have an issue with discipline. Our goal is to provide that type of atmosphere at HASP. We have, however, developed procedures that deal with the repeated discipline issues that may lead to the dismissal of a child from the program. Details on these procedures are available upon request.

Parents

We want you to know, to understand, to discuss with us our goals.

We want you to look often into our busy, happy, noisy, creative program and see what your child experiences. We want you to realize the validity of those

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experiences, and the importance of the enrichment and socialization that they provide.

Prospective families will get a packet, which includes several forms including but not limited to: an enrollment form, a parent handbook, and an activity schedule. The prospective family should contact the Director to schedule an orientation.

Parents are always welcome to come in and observe our program. Volunteers are welcome at HASP. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Director about scheduling a time to come in.

Staff is available for individual conferences; however, since interacting and supervising your children is our primary concern, we ask that you schedule conferences with the Director.

We at HASP want to share with you any information concerning your child or the program that may affect your child. Staff will verbally check in with parents at pick-up concerning any incidents or unusual happenings. We also provide a monthly newsletter including any information that may affect the program. If you notice anything that concerns you or your child, please feel free to talk to the Director or any staff member.

HASP Parent Board: The HASP Parent Board advises the HASP Director and helps establish policies. The Parent Board is comprised of parent volunteers who can commit to meeting regularly to discuss upcoming activities, program needs, needs of children, etc. The Board can also assume responsibility for planning special events, fundraising, social gatherings, facilitating Hardy community involvement in the HASP programs, as well as communication between parents and HASP staff. The HASP Parent Board routinely meets with the HASP Director (approximately 9 times throughout the year). As with other HASP activities, there is an open-door policy and we encourage parent involvement.

Snacks: HASP will serve a snack with a drink at 2:15 - 2:30. There will also be a snack at 4:30 served by HASP.

Note to Kindergarten and 1st grade parents: A staff member will escort Kindergartners and 1st graders from their classrooms to the HASP program after school and on early release days.

Activities

At HASP we provide a balance of recreational and educational experiences. We feel it is important for parents to know what types of activities their children are participating in. We post a daily activity program in the entrance to the classroom. Copies are also available upon request.

Field Trips

To broaden each child's experience we occasionally go off site. Parents will be notified in advance of up-coming field trips and permission slips will be required for children to attend the trip. Depending on the location and mode of transportation, there may be an additional fee to attend the field trip. Buses used by HASP for field trips will be School Department buses. All the relevant information will be on the permission slip.

Staffing

Personnel Policies: The Hardy After-School Program follows the written personnel policies and procedures used by the Arlington Public Schools. These policies include descriptions of the procedures for hiring, promotion, probation, discipline, suspension and dismissal. The policies also cover procedures for handling complaints and provisions for vacation, holidays, leaves and sick days. Job descriptions are available for all HASP positions.

Personnel Records: The Arlington Public Schools maintain a personnel record for each staff member. This record is maintained by the Administration Office.

Staff Evaluation: Evaluation of staff will be ongoing, but each staff person will also receive a bi-annual evaluation. As part of the annual review, each staff member will complete a self-evaluation. This self-evaluation, along with the Program Director's observations made throughout the year, will form the basis for the annual evaluation.

New Staff: New staff members are oriented about the philosophy and goals of the Hardy After-School Program, emergency, health and safety procedures,

special needs of individual children, planned daily activities of the program and expectations of ethical conduct by the Program Director.

Staff Meetings: Staff meetings are held regularly to plan activities, discuss the needs of individual children, review progress toward program goals and coordinate with teachers and activities from the school day.

Staff Development: The Hardy After-School Program provides staff development opportunities to allow staff to improve their skills in working with children and their families. Staff will have access to workshops and conferences on school-age childcare. All staff is trained in First Aid and CPR.

Volunteers: Volunteers occasionally work in the program after receiving a thorough screening and a program orientation. All volunteers are supervised by the Program Director and only count toward the staffing ratio if they meet staff qualifications and are supervised by a staff member.

Administrative Responsibility: The Hardy After-School Program operates under the direction of the Program Director, who reports to the Principal of the Hardy School. The Principal reports to the Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools, who in turn is accountable to the Arlington School Committee.

Staff Roles and Qualifications: The Program Director should have at the minimum a bachelor's degree in Education, Administration, Business or other related field. S/He should have minimum 2 years experience with program administration.

The Program Director is responsible for program philosophy and design, daily operation, communication with families, the safety and well-being of children, supervision and evaluation of staff, and staff training. The Program Director is also responsible for supervision of children and provision of food. The Program Director reports to the Principal.

The Lead Teacher works under the supervision of the Program Director and is responsible for designing activities, supervising children, keeping attendance, providing food and communicating with families.

The Assistant Teacher helps the Lead Teacher and Program Director carry out their responsibilities.

Staffing Ratios: The maximum staffing ratio on any given day will be thirteen children to one qualified staff person. However, on most days, this ratio will be lower.

Interactions between Staff and Children

At HASP we believe that positive child-staff interaction is tremendously important. We encourage staff to converse frequently with children. Staff will treat all children, regardless of gender, race, religion, family background, culture, and ability, with respect and care.

The safety of your child is a priority to the staff at HASP. Children will always be under direct adult supervision. We maintain a staff ratio of at least 1 adult to 13 children. The lead teacher will have, at a minimum, teacher qualifications, in accordance with Department of Education guidelines. A second teacher will always be present in the area. If we take any field trips the student-to-staff ratio will be at least 1 teacher to 10 children and that teacher will be CPR and First Aid certified.

Children with Disabilities

HASP accepts applications for any child with a disability. In determining how HASP will be able to serve a child with disabilities, we shall, with parental consent as appropriate, request information related to the child's participation in the program from the local education agency, early-intervention program, or other health or service providers.

Based upon available information, HASP shall, with the parents' input, identify specific accommodations, if any, required to meet the needs of the child at the program, including but not limited to: any change or modifications in the child's participation in regular activities; any special equipment, materials, ramps, or aids.

In determining whether the accommodations required to serve the child are reasonable or would cause an undue burden to the program, HASP shall consider the following factors, which include but are not limited to: the nature and cost of the accommodations needed to provide care to the child; ability to secure funding or services from other sources; the overall financial resources of the program; the number of staff members employed by the program; the effect on

expenses and resources, or the impact otherwise of such action upon the program.

We will provide written notification to the parent(s) if, in our judgment, the accommodations required to serve the child would cause an undue burden to the program. In addition, HASP shall inform the parent(s) that they may contact the Department of Education and request that the Department assist in determining whether the accommodations would cause an undue burden to the program. The program shall maintain a copy of this notification in its records.

Procedure for Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

HASP protects children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody and follows state law and Arlington School Committee procedures for reporting of any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. All HASP staff are mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect including physical, sexual, and psychological. Specific, formal procedures are followed in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff are given copies and trained in these procedures.

The staff is familiar with the physical and behavioral indications of child abuse. The staff, through the HASP Director, communicates and supports parents both informally and through conferences initiated by either parent(s) or the staff. A comfortable and safe environment will be established so that children will be able to speak about their concerns. If a staff member suspects child abuse or neglect, and does not see appropriate action taken within a reasonable timeframe, as a mandated reporter, s/he will contact the local DSS office in Arlington.

If child abuse/neglect is suspected of a staff member, it will be addressed immediately. The staff will speak directly to the HASP Director or Hardy School Principal, who will initiate required paperwork, notify the family, and contact the Department of Social Services. The allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member(s) will be put on a leave of absence pending an investigation by the appropriate authorities.

Referral Procedure for Children or Families in Need

HASP has procedures for referring family members to appropriate social, mental health, medical, dental and vision services.

If a staff member has a concern about a child, she/he will bring it to the attention of the Director, who will observe the child. The Director will contact the parent(s) for a meeting to discuss the matter. The parent(s) will be given written notes of incidents of concern. The Director can assist with the specifics of these referrals if desired. No referrals will be made without parental consent. A copy of all referrals will be kept on file. HASP will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate every child's needs.

HASP maintains a list of local resources available to children and families in the Arlington area. The referral list is available upon request.

Referral Resources Available to Children and Family

Arlington Public Schools
Early Childhood Coordinator
Early Intervention Program
Contact: Lori Villani
781-316-3728

Arlington Youth Consultation Center
Counseling Services
781-316-3255

Arlington Public Schools
Special Services (disabilities)
Chapter 766 Contact
781-316-3530

Mt. Auburn Hospital (Cambridge)
617-492-3500

Winchester Hospital
781-729-9000

Department of Social Services
50 Mystic Street
Arlington, MA 02474
781-641-8500
800-769-4615

Children's Records and Confidentiality

A legible, current, and confidential record is maintained on each child enrolled in the program. The record is available to the child's parent(s) upon written request. HASP will not release information in the record to any unauthorized person without the prior written authorization of the parent(s). All information contained in a child's records is available only to those individuals directly involved in the implementation of the Hardy After-School Program, to other individuals as otherwise required by state law, or to persons authorized in writing by the child's parent(s). HASP will notify the parents immediately if a child's record is subpoenaed by a Court of Law.

Parents are required to provide written authorizations, consents, and information, prior to enrollment, which will be made part of the child's record. Written consent and authorization is valid for 1 year unless withdrawn prior to that time in writing. Records are maintained for a period of 1 year following a child's termination from care or for a period determined by the Arlington School Committee.

Parents have the right to request access to or copies from their child's file and we will provide such access or copies within a reasonable amount of time. If copies are requested we will charge a reasonable fee. We require written parental consent to release any information from a child's file.

Parents always have the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant information to a child's record. A child's parent(s) shall have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's records. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below: if such parent(s) is/are of the opinion that adding information

is sufficient to explain, clarify, or correct objectionable material in the child's record, the parent(s) shall have a conference with the HASP Director to make the objections known. Within one week of the conference, HASP will inform the parent(s) of our decision regarding the information in question. If the decision is in favor of the parent(s), the information in the child's record will be deleted or amended immediately.

Organization

HASP operates under the auspices of the Arlington Public School System and follows School Committee policies. The overall management of HASP is the responsibility of the Director, who reports to the Principal of the Hardy School. Day-to-day management of the program is by the Director, with support from the staff.

Complaints

If parents have concerns or complaints these should be brought to the individual teacher first. If the parent feels the complaint or concern is not adequately dealt with the parent should bring the concern or complaint to the Director or Assistant Director. If the parent feels the complaint is still not adequately dealt with they may bring the issue to the Principal of the school.

Business Management

The program has an established system of business management and record keeping to ensure that it maintains complete and accurate accounts & records. The HASP has a projected one-year budget. The program formulates an annual report if requested by the Arlington School Committee, including but not limited to, a financial summary of the previous fiscal year and enrollment data.