

Vail Inclusive Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Handbook



vail inclusive preschool

Very Important Preschoolers (VIP)

Dear Families,

Thank you for your interest in the Vail School District Inclusive Preschool Program. This handbook is designed to answer frequently asked questions about our programs. We believe that the success of our program is a direct result of the dedicated and enthusiastic efforts of both our staff and the families who we serve. Together, we can make an important contribution towards the health, well-being and education of our children.

Please do not hesitate to call me at 879-1755 if you need further information.

Sincerely,

Heather Nordbrock

Director

Vail Inclusive Preschool

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Our mission is to teach our Very Important Preschoolers, of **all** abilities to...

* Learn to love school

* Accept others for who they are

* Explore through play in a positive, fun, and encouraging environment.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Vail Inclusive Preschool Program exists to give young children the experiences they need to become successful learners and contributing members of our community. It is our philosophy that all children have a right to quality care and education. The children in our program are encouraged to explore their world, ask questions and share their knowledge in preparation for the academic and social expectations of school. Our students are supported by teachers, paraprofessionals, and therapeutic staff who provide a safe, caring and structured learning environment so all children can realize and reach their full potential.

We understand the importance of safety, consistency, and joy in the lives of the children who we serve. Respect and nurturing are shown daily to children as we accept and embrace:

- The uniqueness and special qualities of each child.
- The emphasis on the whole child, not just one single area of development.
- An environment that acknowledges both structured and unstructured play as the most appropriate way for young children to learn.
- The importance of early intervention and positive role modeling.
- Parents as equal partners.

Parents, staff and community members from the Vail School District met several years ago to create and implement the A.C.T. Statement. Through positive reinforcement, encouragement, and role-modeling, it is our hope that children and adults in Vail:

- Are respectful and trustworthy
- Care about each other
- Take responsibility

ABOUT OUR STAFF

Our staff is chosen specifically for their professionalism, as well as their caring and loving attitude towards children. Staff are expected to greet children and parents daily, role model respect, be actively engaged with children, and work together to create a nurturing and supportive environment. Classroom teachers have a high degree of education, experience and knowledge in child development, and are dedicated to providing a nurturing and educationally appropriate setting for all children. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or share concerns.

PRESCHOOL

CURRICULUM

Children are exposed to letters, numbers, sounds, environmental print, and math and science concepts on a daily basis. However, our primary focus for children ages 3-5 is social and emotional development and language acquisition. Our goal is to provide a learning atmosphere that is rich in opportunities for children to explore their natural world, express themselves, make choices and take risks in a safe and developmentally appropriate setting. Our motto is "Dress for Mess!" Emphasis is given to child-directed activities, which allows for hands-on explorations in the child's natural environment. Staff act as facilitators to help children achieve optimal learning experiences. Daily routines and schedules will be posted in each room. Our goal is to promote growth in the following Developmental Domains:

Language and Literacy: Communicating through listening, speaking, reading, writing, and other verbal and non-verbal modes.

Cognitive: Acquiring, storing and retrieving information. Developing concepts, symbolic thoughts and reasoning skills.

Social: Initiating and maintaining relationships, responding appropriately to others and interacting with others.

Emotional: Identifying self, managing emotions, developing strengths and self-esteem.

Creative: Thinking, communicating or acting in ways that are new and original and developing imagination and inventiveness.

Approaches to Learning: Provides an engaging environment that allows children to explore and create independently and using their own approach to a learning situation.

Math: Promote thinking and curiosity, mathematical language, and explore and experiment with numbers, shapes, measurement, and patterns.

Social Studies: Learn about history, geography, understand past, present and future and the knowledge we are part of a community.

Science: Provide inquiry-based activities where children can seek answers, plan, observe, predict, and form conclusions.

Physical: Developing large and small muscle control, sensory awareness and physical maturity.

Adaptive: Developing self-help skills, such as dressing self and caring for personal needs.

Curriculum Goals Met By:

Exposure to stories, songs, poems, music, dramatic play, sequencing, rhyming, inventive writing, dictation and other language activities to enhance reading readiness.

Practice/mastery of skills utilizing blocks, puzzles, graphs, games, and manipulatives to promote logic and higher thinking skills, as well as cooking and science experiences that will require children to use all of their senses to gain knowledge about the world in which they live.

Sharing, taking turns, learning to resolve conflicts, practicing negotiation skills, expressing feelings, and observing role-models to allow opportunities for positive social interactions.

Allowing for choices, encouraging appropriate self-expression, and providing opportunities for children to develop friendships with peers and positive relationships with adult role models.

Exposing children to new activities, materials, ideas and experiences that encourage unique solutions and celebrate accomplishments.

Active outside experiences such as climbing, riding, pushing/pulling and throwing equipment and movement activities to increase spatial awareness and large motor development. Restructuring raw materials such as paint, play dough, sand and water, and the availability of drawing/writing/cutting tools to promote creativity, self-expression and the development of fine motor skills. Peer-to-peer modeling, practice opportunities, taking care of personal items, helping to cleanup, self feeding and taking care of personal hygiene needs to foster independence and responsibility.

CURRICULUM SHARED WITH FAMILIES

Families will receive nightly emails from teachers addressing the standards and curriculum taught during the school day. At Parent Teacher Conferences families and staff will review student progress in regards to the curriculum and standards.

ADJUSTMENT TO SCHOOL

Every year each site holds an “Open House” so that parents and children can become familiar with the program, classrooms and staff. This is your opportunity to meet other families, ask questions and share information.

All children adjust to new situations in their own unique way. In our program, we respect each child’s individual personality. Some children may need to bring something from home (a special stuffed animal, picture, etc.) to help ease the transition from home to school. Staff will contact parents if a child seems to be having difficulty adjusting to the environment. Parents and staff will work together to help the child feel confident in his/her new surroundings. Please do not hesitate to discuss any concerns you may have with the staff, and remember, you are always welcome to visit and participate in our program at any time.

CHILD FIND/SCREENINGS

Screenings are available to children in the areas of hearing, vision, speech & language, cognitive, adaptive, social-emotional, and motor development. Parents who have concerns about their child’s development should call 879-1754 to schedule an appointment. If a child is deemed eligible for special education services, a team of specialists, including parents, will develop an Individual Education Program (IEP) with written annual goals.

REGULATORY AGENCIES

Our programs are governed by the Vail Unified School District’s Governing Board, monitored by the Department of Economic Security and is regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Inspection reports are available upon request in the office and also at:

Arizona Department of Health Services
Office of Childcare Licensure, 400 W. Congress, Suite 100, Tucson, Arizona 85701,
(520) 628-6540

LIABILITY

Liability insurance is carried through Vail Unified School District.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Preschool and Pre K Hours

Enrollment Criteria:

Ages 3 years old to 5 years old.
4 days per week (Monday-Thursday)
Morning classes from 7:45-10:30 a.m.
Afternoon classes from 11:45-2:30 p.m.

Articulation Class (based on individual needs)

30 minutes per week

Enrichment Enrollment Criteria:

Ages 2 years old to 5 years old.
Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Each child must provide for their own basic care to include: feeding self without assistance, toileting without assistance, expressing basic needs to staff, and providing no threat to self or other children. This area may not apply to children with special needs and a current IEP.

The Health History Form, current immunization records and all other paperwork must be filled out completely, and on file at the site before the child can attend class.

Items to Bring to School:

(*Please label all items with your child's name)
Backpack
Water bottle
Change of clothes (top, bottom, and underwear)
Lunch for children in full day childcare
Snack and drink – we are a NUT FREE school
Diapers or pull-ups and wipes if needed
Hat, Jacket or sweatshirt
Blanket for rest time if child is in full day childcare
Ziploc bag (XL size) to contain all sleep items

Classroom Supply List:

A list for items requested by each student is located at the end of the packet. Please remember to also check the teacher wish list posted in their classroom throughout the year.

Change of Address or Phone Number

Please notify your child's teacher and the VIP office if your phone number or address change.

Financial Assistance

We understand that at times, many families experience crisis and financial hardships. If you are unable to pay your fees, please call the billing office immediately to arrange a payment schedule.

Removal Procedures:

A child may be removed from the preschool for the following reasons:

Discipline- reasons as stated under Discipline policy.

Age- a child will no longer be enrolled in the preschool after entering kindergarten.

Past due Tuition- Should the account become delinquent, the Program withholds the right to remove the child. Reenrollment will be at the discretion of the program coordinator and may include a 3- month prepayment of tuition.

Non- Attendance- Any child who is absent for a period of two weeks (unexcused) may be removed from the program.

Late pick-up- any child picked up late (after scheduled end time) more than three times may be removed from the program.

Student Pick Up/Drop Off

When attending, children must be signed in and out daily in the sign in/out notebooks. Licensing requires you to sign your first and last name. Children will only be released to the custodial parent(s) or to anyone listed on the emergency card, unless written authorization from a parent is given. Persons dropping off or picking up children must be at least age 16 or older. Phone authorization for release of a child will only be accepted when a password plan has been instituted in advance. A picture I.D. is required of anyone picking up a child who is unknown to the staff.

Health/Safety/Medications

We are committed to providing a healthy environment, promoted through hand washing, rest time, and washing toys and tables with a bleach solution. However, children will get sick. Therefore, children need to remain at home if any of the following are present: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, severe coughing, pink eye, head lice, chicken pox, or any other contagious disease. Children need to be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

In the event that your child should become sick or injured at school, you will be notified to pick up your child. The sick child will be kept in a quiet, isolated area until the parent or emergency contact person arrives. It is to the benefit of all children that a sick child is kept at home. A recovering child is more susceptible to illness if appropriate rest and care are not provided.

In the case of a minor injury, such as a scraped knee, splinter, or nose bleed, the child will be treated in accordance with First Aid procedures and an Incident Report stating what happened and how the child was cared for will be sent home with the child. In the case of an emergency, parents or emergency contact persons will be notified immediately and authorized medical attention will be given. Information regarding any allergies, medical conditions or special needs must be listed on the child's enrollment form.

The site health office is permitted to dispense medications with parent/guardian authorization. If a child needs medication the parent must fill out a medication consent form (available from front office). All medications, including inhalers, sunscreens, over the counter drugs, prescription drugs, should be furnished by the parent/guardian in the original container and labeled with the child's first and last name, date, name of medication, dose, time to be taken, and date to be discontinued. Any medications given will be logged in on a chart with time, date, dose, and signature of the staff person who administered the medication.

Field Trips

Field trips are an exciting way for children to participate in learning experiences outside of the classroom. Vail School District buses and drivers will be used for transportation to and from all field trips. Parents must give written permission in order for a child to attend a field trip. If adult chaperones are needed for the field trip, those adults must follow the district volunteer guidelines.

Snacks/Lunch

We are a NUT FREE school. Parents are required to provide a daily nutritious snack for their child. Cold gel packs and insulated bags should be utilized by parents to keep food items fresh. Due to Health Department regulations, staff are not allowed to warm, cut, or stir any food items. During the school year, children staying all day need to bring a lunch from home as well.

Rest Time

A rest/quiet time will be provided for all children who stay through the day. Children should bring one fitted crib sheet to be placed on top of their mat and one blanket to be used as a cover. Please take the sheet and blanket home weekly for laundering, and please make sure all items are clearly labeled with the child's name.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program. Children with special needs may qualify for District transportation according to their Individual Education Plans.

Communication

Staff will communicate with families in a variety of ways including direct contact, notes, phone calls, email and newsletters. Each room has a bulletin board featuring information about the program, weekly lesson plans and upcoming events. Staff may have information to share with you, so we discourage the use of cell phones when dropping off or picking up your child. Formal conferences will be held twice per year, once in September and once in February, however additional conferences may be held at the request of parents and/or staff. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the Director if you have any questions or concerns.

Photographs/Slides/Videotaping

Photographs of children, family members and staff are displayed in every room. Documenting class projects and special events through pictures or videotapes provides a visual record of long-term projects and allows parents the opportunity to "see" activities children are involved in daily.

Open Enrollment

When space is available students will be accepted for open enrollment.

Playgrounds

In accordance with licensing regulations, families may not be on the playground with their children or siblings during school hours.

High School Intern Program

One of the benefits of our location is that we have High School Interns that help in our classrooms. These students are interested in furthering their careers in education. Their duties include taking students to the library, reading to the students in the classroom, helping the students with their activities, and eventually conducting their own lessons in the classroom. While these High School students are a wonderful asset to our program, they are never left alone with any of our students and their responsibilities are mentored by VIP staff.

Television/Movies/Toys

Television and movie viewing is limited to “bad weather” days and special occasions. Only “G” rated movies or PBS children television shows will be shown. Children are discouraged from bringing valuable toys and electronic games to school. No toy guns or weapons are allowed. The program does not take responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen items.

Discipline Policy

Staff members will use communication, redirection, role-modeling appropriate behavior, and problem solving techniques when helping a child deal with conflict. Parents will be notified if a child is endangering the health and safety of him / herself and others. If the child continues to engage in harmful behavior, parents will be asked to meet with staff to formulate a behavior plan. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in loss of services. Children will be dismissed or suspended from the program with no warning for major infractions where the safety of the staff or other children are compromised such as violence or evading supervision.

Requests

All requests for teacher and/or AM or PM classes must be provided in writing to the Director during the specified period each year. Requests will be honored if possible, but no guarantee can be made. We must look at class size, demographics and gender.

Pesticide Policy

A 48 hour notice is provided when pesticides will be used on campus. Our pesticide usage policy is posted at each location.

45 Day Screening

At VIP, it is considered best practice to screen every child within 45 days or after he/she turns three-years-old in the areas of hearing, vision, and communication. Parents or guardians will be notified by a letter with any concerns regarding these areas.

Transition to Kindergarten

Preschool staff will work with families to help facilitate the transition to their homeschool for kindergarten. Information will be provided to parents regarding Kinder Round Up held at each elementary school in the spring. During Kinder Round Up, parents learn about the kindergarten programs, meet the teachers, and fill out required paperwork. Children will visit a kindergarten classroom and participate in activities to facilitate a smooth transition. If your child has an IEP a meeting will be held at your homeschool to create a new IEP and transition plan.

Dear Parents:

Should an emergency or disaster situation ever arise in our area while school is in session, we want you to be aware that the schools have made preparations to respond effectively to such situations. In fact, public schools in [State] are built to meet stringent construction standards and they may be safer than your own home in the event of a disaster.

Should we have a major disaster during school hours, your student(s) will be cared for at this school. Our School District has a detailed disaster plan which has been formulated to respond to a major catastrophe.

Your cooperation is necessary in any emergency.

1. Do not telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication.
2. In the event of a serious emergency, students will be kept at their schools until they are picked up by an identified, responsible adult who has been identified as such on a School District emergency card, which is required to be filled out by parents at the beginning of every school year. Please be sure you consider the following criteria when you authorize another person to pick up your child at school:
 - He/she is 16 years of age or older.
 - He/she is usually home during the day.
 - He/she could walk to school, if necessary.
 - He/she is known to your child.
 - He/she is both aware and able to assume this responsibility.
3. Turn your radio to [radio stations] for emergency announcements. If students are to be kept at school, radio stations will be notified. If electrical service is not affected, information will be relayed via the Internet. In addition, information regarding day-to-day school operations will be available by calling the District Office.
4. Impress upon your children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency.

Students will be released only to parents and persons identified on the School District Emergency Card. During an extreme emergency, students will be released at designated reunion gates located on school campuses. Parents should become familiar with the School Emergency Disaster Plan and be patient and understanding with the student release process. Please instruct your student to remain at school until you or a designee arrives. Because local telephone service may be disrupted, also list an out-of-State contact on the emergency card, as calls may still be made out of the area while incoming calls are affected.

The decision to keep students at school will be based upon whether or not streets in the area are open. If this occurs, radio stations will be notified. In the event that a natural disaster takes place during the time that students are being transported, students will be kept on the bus and the driver will ask for assistance through radio contact with the school and district personnel. Any child who is home waiting for the bus will not be picked up (if roads are impassable) and remains the responsibility of the parent or guardian. In the event a natural disaster occurs in the afternoon, the driver will make every attempt to continue delivering the students to their homes. Should road conditions prevent the driver from delivering students to their home or to school in the morning, the students will be delivered to the nearest school site and that school will communicate with the home school to inform them of the students' whereabouts.

In case of a hazardous release event (chemical spill) near the school area, Shelter-in-Place procedures will be implemented to provide in place protection. All students and staff will clear the fields, report to their rooms and all efforts will be made to prevent outside air from entering classrooms during the emergency.

“Shelter-in-Place” signs will be placed in classroom windows or hung outside classroom doors during a drill or emergency. Students arriving at school during a Shelter-in-Place drill or event should report to the school office or to a previously designated area at the school because classrooms will be inaccessible. When the dangerous incident has subsided, an all-clear signal will be given.

Please discuss these matters with your immediate family. Planning ahead will help alleviate concern during emergencies.

Sincerely,

Heather Nordbrock
Director
Vail Inclusive Preschool