

KIDS FIRST/SPARK

After School Programs



Student/Parent Handbook
2021-2022

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to our After School Programs!

I'm excited to announce that SPARK has joined with the KIDS FIRST After School Program!

SPARK will now take place as a segment of the Kids First Afterschool Program. You can still find SPARK every Tuesday after school, but our hours and location have changed. Please read through this handbook as it includes detailed information about Program activities, procedures, and policies and keep it in a safe place for easy reference during the school year.

SPARK & Kids First strive to provide an atmosphere where students can enjoy, grow, and learn. The staff always welcome suggestions and ideas that will help us make your child's time at the Program beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us at any time. Our SPARK/Kids First staff are committed to the growth and development of every student.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at kristi.odegaard@k12.sd.us

Best regards,

Kristi A. Odegaard

Kristi Odegaard
SPARK & Kids First Program Director

THE SPARK PROGRAM

The SPARK Program utilizes the Lake Preston School Kids First Room for its designated area and is open to any K-5th grade student that wishes to attend.

The staff includes the Technology Coordinator, a Kids First Worker, and volunteer parents. Background checks are performed on all staff members employed by the Program. The Program Director is your main point of contact and oversees the staff and curriculum.

SPARK's policy for the Program maintains a maximum staff/student ratio of one to twenty.

21-22 SCHEDULE – the following Tuesdays from 4:30-5:30

September – 7, 14, 21, 28

October – 5, 12, 19, 26

November – 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

December – 7, 14

January – 4, 11, 18, 25

February – 1, 8, 15, 22

March – 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

April – 5, 12, 19, 26

THE KIDS FIRST PROGRAM

The Kids First Program utilizes classrooms on the North side of the Lake Preston Campus for its designated area and is open to any K-5th grade student that wishes to attend.

The staff includes the Technology Coordinator, and Lake Preston teachers and non-certified. Background checks are performed on all staff members employed by the Program. The Program Director is your main point of contact and oversees the staff and curriculum.

Kids First's policy for the Program maintains a maximum staff/student ratio of one to fifteen.

21-22 SCHEDULE – Monday through Thursday of the following weeks

Kids First is not held on Fridays or days where there is a 2:00 dismissal or non-school days.

September – 7-9, 13-16, 20-23, 27-30

October – 4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 25-28

November – 1-4, 8-11, 15-18, 22nd & 23rd

December – 11/29–12/2, 6-9, 13-16, 20th

January – 3-6, 10-13, 17-20, 24-27

February – 1/31-2/3, 7-10, 14-17, 21-24

March – 2/28-3/3, 7-10, 14-17, 21-24, 28-31

April – 4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 25-28

SPARK & KIDS FIRST INFORMATION:

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

An enrollment form for both Programs is available at the Elementary Office and online. Enrollment forms must be completed each school year.

The enrollment form includes the student's personal information, emergency contacts, full legal names of persons authorized to pick up the student, any health, and other information. The enrollment form must be completed prior to student attendance as it is used as proof that immunization levels of all children are current and kept on file with the Elementary office. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to update our information should any changes occur in emergency, telephone, or other throughout the school year.

SPARK/Kids First maintains confidentiality in all information concerning children in our care and assure that details of a child's life or of the child's family is not shared with unauthorized individuals.

PROGRAM CANCELLED

SPARK/Kids First will be cancelled whenever the Lake Preston School District is dismissed early due to inclement weather or whenever there is an unexpected event that impacts the use of the designated area. The Program Director may need to cancel due to illness or unforeseen schedule conflicts; the cancellation notice will be posted in the Elementary Welcome Area and via email.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Students are expected to attend SPARK on a regular basis. Any student who decides to no longer attend SPARK is asked to inform the Program Director, so project supply numbers can be adjusted.

Kids First attendance is optional; therefore, program staff are NOT responsible if your child(ren) decide to not attend that day. Kids First daily attendance will be used along with Good Behavior to determine Field Trip attendance and/or rewards for each Quarter.

Daily Sign-In & Sign-Out

Students must report directly to Kids First as soon as they are dismissed from their regular school day and sign-in with the staff member for attendance purposes. SPARK students will be offered snack, and educational learning time from 3:32 until 4:30 PM. The SPARK activity will be from 4:30 – 5:30 PM.

The Program enrollment form includes pick up instructions for parents/guardians to indicate how students will leave the Program each day. All SPARK students must be signed up to attend Kids First, and be picked up by an authorized adult, or have parental permission to walk home (due to no crossing guard on duty).

If a student will be picked up from either Program, the person authorized to pick up the student will enter the North AUX Gym Entrance of the building and speak with staff before leaving the building. Students will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or person listed on the student's enrollment form, unless the student's parent/guardian notifies the Program in writing or calls prior to pick-up time.

If the students are given the option to walk home depending on their daily preference, then all siblings will be required to do the same as the eldest child.

Late Pickup

SPARK & Kids First finish at approximately 5:30 PM. We ask parents/guardians or others authorized to pick up students if they are running late, to call the school at 847-4455.

If a student is picked up more than fifteen (15) minutes after 5:30 PM, the late pickup will be noted. After the third occurrence of a late pickup, any additional late pickup may result in a student's suspension or removal from the Program.

SNACK POLICY

Each child will be allowed a snack each day. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after snack. Snacks are provided by parents and donations. We ask that nutrition and healthiness of the snack provided be considered. Dietary needs will be accounted for and food allergies recorded, shared with all staff making prevention of food allergy reactions our priority. In the event of a severe food allergy reaction, staff will call 911 to transport the child to the nearest emergency room and immediately contact parent.

HEALTH POLICY

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the Program or exhibits any of the following conditions, his/her parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be contacted and asked to pick up the student early.

If a student needs urgent hospital attention, staff will call 911, the student will be transported to the hospital by ambulance, and the student's parent/guardian will be held responsible for all costs incurred.

Please report any changes of emergency contact information, employment, telephone numbers, or addresses to the Program Director as soon as they become available. Although this information will be kept confidential, it will be shared with appropriate staff members to facilitate communication with parents or guardians in emergency situations.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

We focus on positive behaviors and expectations during the SPARK/Kids First programs. Staff are continuously teaching children through role modeling appropriate behaviors, redirecting inappropriate behaviors and explaining social norms to children. The standard for discipline is positive guidance instead of punishment.

Students will receive a small reward or a short field trip Quarterly for Good Behavior along with being there for half of the attendance days available. These incentives will start over each quarter with an end of the year fun day for all attendees. Students having reached the second offense or beyond will not be allowed to receive a reward for that quarter.

The parents, students, and staff of SPARK/Kids First are asked to treat each other with respect, tolerance, kindness, and consideration. Students must always exhibit respectful classroom conduct, follow the Elementary Handbook, and will be asked to leave a class or activity for inappropriate behavior.

The following procedures will be followed in the event participants behave unacceptably:

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| First Offense: | Discussion with child – verbal warning, possible time-out if deemed necessary |
| Second Offense: | Discussion with child – time out/removal from activity |
| Third Offense: | Discussion with child- time out/removal from activity –
Program Director will contact parent/guardian & discuss behavioral plan
Removal from the Program for 2 Tuesdays (Spark) or 2 weeks (Kids First) |
| Fourth Offense: | Discussion with child, time-out/removal from activity
Program Director will contact parent/guardian
Removal from the Program |

Offenses include but not limited to: Disrespectful, inappropriate language, not following directions, defiance, cheating/lying, hitting/pushing, throwing objects, fighting, destruction of property, threats/harassment, intent to injure or harm another, theft, and weapons.

NOTE: Serious or disruptive/destructive behavior that interferes with normal Program operation will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal with no previous notice to a parent/guardian.

Staff will be charting daily behaviors (both good & bad) to help us monitor for any patterns or triggers that may help us and your child(ren) grow and learn in a healthy and safe environment.

Any inappropriate behavior by a parent, including verbal abuse of a student or staff member or confrontations with staff members in the presence of a student, is grounds for termination of the family's participation in the Programs without notice.

STUDENT SAFETY

An emergency/evacuation plan is on file in the Kids First Rooms. The program director is responsible for practicing fire and tornado drills with the students.

The welfare and safety of the children in our charge is paramount. Kids First staff members are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect and are required by state law to report any instance where he/she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected. Mandatory reporters must report the instance to the state's attorney, Department of Social Services, or law enforcement. Staff must educate themselves as to the definition of abuse or neglect through professional classes or in-service. Record of this training is kept by the Kids First Director. In addition, it is against the policy of the Lake Preston School District and Kids First for a staff member to ever verbally, physically, emotionally or sexually abuse a child. Any staff member who is accused of any form of abuse will be suspended until further notice and policies of the Lake Preston School District will be followed.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Both After School Programs stress the importance of educational learning time and has set time aside every day for the children to complete their homework assignments, work on their computer skills, practice math, read books, do flash cards, etc. Staff members are available to supervise the homework/learning area and to assist the children with their work. We encourage a child who needs individual help with his or her homework to ask.

Example Day:

3:32 – 3:45 – Transition from Class to the Kids First Room, check-in for attendance, baskets, etc.

3:45 – 4:30 – Educational Learning Time – Homework, reading, screen time, computer skills, educational games
Educational Learning time will be tailored specifically to each age group to challenge their individual skills. (Ex. Counting & Charting out colored goldfish crackers from snack) K-1 work on counting skills and sorting by color, 2-3 can use bar charts, tally marks, 4-5 could use Excel).

SNACK – we will have snack during our educational time (approx. 4:00)

4:30 – 5:00 – Activity 1 (Crafts, Baking, Music, Movement, Outdoor Games, etc.)

5:00 – 5:30 – Activity 2 (Crafts, Baking, Music, Movement, Outdoor Games, etc.)
Depending on the day's activity it may be 15 minutes of movement with a 45 minute activity.

Monthly calendars will be provided with scheduled activities.

COMMUNICATION

Communication with families for both programs is extremely important and we maintain an open-door policy. Parents can observe their children at any time and are more than welcome to help as volunteers, lead craft projects, help with a baking project, etc. Any questions regarding policies, staffing, activities, or a student's participation in the Program may be directed to the Program Director.

If a concern involving a staff member arises, please speak directly to the staff member involved. If the matter cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, the Program Director will meet with the staff member and arrange a meeting with the staff member and parent to discuss and resolve the concern.

DISCLAIMER

Policies and procedures regarding topics not covered above can be found in the Lake Preston Elementary Handbook, Acceptable Use Policies, or the Lake Preston School Board Policy.