

**Burr Community Afterschool Program**  
**Parent Handbook**

**Last revised May 2007**

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Burr Community Afterschool Program, Inc. (BCAP) provides enrichment and enjoyment for the children from Auburndale and West Newton communities who attend Burr Elementary School. BCAP serves children between 5 and 12 years of age. The fundamental program goal is to provide a safe, high quality, and affordable after school program. This is accomplished in a safe and respectful environment that offers opportunities for socializing, unwinding, and releasing energy. The program provides structured activities from which each child may choose, including sports, arts, crafts, free play, drama, and cooking. These activities are of sufficient range to appeal to many personalities and interests, are balanced between quiet and active, and seek to extend the child's skills and experiences.

Attention is paid to each child's emotional and social development. Self-confidence and self-respect are encouraged, as are responsibility, decision-making, and respect for others. Children in BCAP contribute to the development of rules, which place limits on certain kinds of behavior and help to create an environment in which each child's privacy and right to make choices are protected.

## ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY

Established in 1980 as the Williams Extended Day Program, the program name was changed in 2003 to reflect both current location and community served. BCAP is a non-profit corporation that was founded and continues to be run by parents. The Office of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority for BCAP.

The program is separate from the Newton Public Schools, but enjoys a constructive professional relationship with the school system, particularly the administration and teachers at Burr School. The program operates in space rented from the City of Newton in the Burr School building.

Parents or guardians (hereafter "Parents") of children enrolled in the program are eligible to become members of BCAP Corporation and participate in the election of the Board of Directors. The Board represents members in administering and supervising the program. Each family with one child or more in the program has the opportunity to claim a membership slot during the annual enrollment process.

BCAP does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, handicap, sex, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, disability, and/or sexual orientation in its hiring or enrollment practices.

## BCAP STAFF

Programming, administration, management, and care of the children during the program hours are the responsibility of the paid professional staff. The BCAP staff have and continue to receive training in behavior management, child development, anti-bullying, and curriculum design. All staff are certified in First Aid/CPR.

The anticipated 2007-2008 staff of BCAP are:

Staff Person	Position	Years at BCAP	Education
Liz Kennedy	Director	19	B.A. University of Massachusetts; M.Ed. University of Massachusetts
Tom McLaren	Program/Kindergarten Coordinator, Art Specialist	12	B.S. Rhode Island College; Elementary Ed. North Adams State
Sarah Karaian	Afterschool Teacher	7	B.A. Boston College
Alicia Stevens	Older Kids Coordinator	5	Massachusetts Bay Community College
Sarah Barnett	Afterschool Teacher, Science Specialist	5	B.A. Wellesley College; M.Ed. Harvard University
Mallory Johnson	Afterschool Teacher	1	Mass Bay Community College
Ben Abrahams	Afterschool Teacher	1	B.A. University of Pittsburgh
Liz Norris	Afterschool Teacher	1	B.A. Skidmore College

Other part-time staff have defined roles that complement programming.

## REGISTRATION AND INTAKE INFORMATION

Registration for the Fall program year begins during the preceding Spring. Registration forms are provided on-site for current BCAP families and are mailed upon request to others. BCAP strongly recommends, but does not require, that parents visit the program before taking steps to register a child for the first time.

A completed registration form specifying requested program hours is submitted along with the required registration fee. Every effort is made to fully accommodate registration requests, but enrollment preferences cannot be guaranteed due to limits on space and staff availability. A non-refundable, one time fee is required upon initial registration. Any changes to a child's schedule after program year registration are dependent on space availability and are subject to a \$20 change of schedule fee to cover administrative costs.

Children already attending BCAP have priority for program slots, as do families with children already in BCAP who have siblings entering the program for the first time.

## PROGRAM CALENDAR AND DESIGN

BCAP opens on the first day of the school year in September and ends on the last day of the school year in June. The program normally operates Monday through Friday from 12:30 pm until 6:00 pm. With the exception of February and April break weeks, BCAP operates on the calendar of the Newton Public schools and is closed on holidays when schools are closed. **One exception to routine program hours is the day before Thanksgiving when BCAP opens at noon and closes at 4:00pm.**

## ACTIVITIES, TRIPS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The staff of BCAP plan and implement all program activities and special events. The activities vary according to the day, but they generally include a choice of free time, cooking, gym, art, and board games. BCAP also offers both large and small group field trips throughout the year. Destinations include museums, hiking, skating, bowling, and basketball away game trips.

Special events are an important part of BCAP. These include a Halloween Party, a Thanksgiving feast (with stew), and, in December, two crafts fairs that raise money for charity. BCAP Olympics are held in February, a Carnival takes place in March, and a Pasta Dinner occurs in April. Events culminate with a year-end show in June called the Creative Convention in which the children have the opportunity sing, dance, and perform.

## KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Kindergartners are the only children at BCAP between 12:30 pm and 3:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Group time, special thematic units, and a low child-to-staff ratio contribute to the success of this special program.

## OLDER KIDS (OK) CLUB

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade children have their own area at BCAP. They have opportunities to either participate in the various activities offered daily, or to just socialize with their friends. Many of the older children choose to do their homework at BCAP, freeing up their home time in the evening. The older kids also take field trips and help out during special events.

## VACATION WEEKS

BCAP is closed during the December break, but operates vacation programs from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm during February and April school break weeks for the convenience of program families. A minimum enrollment of ten children is required in order for these programs to operate. **Both vacation week programs are optional and not covered by regular program tuition. Enrollment is on a first-come basis and requires separate sign up and fee.** Vacation week programs are filled with short and long field trips, and other special activities.

## SNOW DAYS

BCAP closes when the Newton Public Schools close because of snow or other unanticipated events. Weather-related school closings are broadcast over local radio and television stations beginning in the early morning.

If there is severe weather during the school day, the Newton Public Schools will determine if an early closing time is necessary. If the schools close early, BCAP will not operate. If BCAP itself must close early because of weather, parents or emergency contacts will be notified by phone of the time children are expected to be picked up. Late fees will apply for children picked up after the designated closing time.

### **EXTRA HOURS AND EARLY RELEASE**

It is sometimes possible for children enrolled in BCAP to attend the program outside their regularly scheduled days. This service is subject to attendance numbers. The cost is \$27.50 for time on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, and \$48.50 for Tuesday. The fee is \$23.25 for extra hours during the Kindergarten 12:30 pm to 3:00pm time slot.

Parents of Burr students who are not enrolled in the regular BCAP program can request program hours on a limited basis. There is an initial \$30 registration fee for the service, plus the cost of hours used.

Newton Public Schools close at 12:30 pm every sixth Thursday ("Early Release"). Regular enrollment numbers and staffing patterns limit the ability to accommodate additional children on these early release days. Requests for additional program hours on early release days must be made at the time of annual registration and pre-payment is required for all extra time requested on early release days. Parents will be notified as to the status of their request in July.

### **CHILD RELEASE AUTHORIZATION**

Only people explicitly listed on the registration form will be allowed to pick up a designated child from BCAP. Last minute pick up changes must be authorized by a parent in writing, via phone to a staff person, or in person.

Burr School teachers and staff will sometimes request that a child stay late or return to his/her classroom. **Written permission must be provided authorizing BCAP to release a child to a Burr School teacher or staff.** This authorization form is included in the registration packet.

### **SIGN OUT**

All adults who pick up children from the program are required to sign the attendance sheet posted just inside the entry door. BCAP staff are required to call a child's home in the event they leave without having been signed out. A fee of \$10 will be assessed for each call resulting from failure to properly sign out.

It is important to have a smooth transition between BCAP staff and parents in order to assure the safety and well-being of children in the program. To minimize confusion, BCAP staff relinquish responsibility at the point that a parent or designated pick-up person greets a child. Once this transfer of responsibility occurs, the child is considered under the supervision of the person doing pickup.

### **CLOSING TIME/LATE PICK-UP FEES**

All children must be picked up by their parents or an authorized pick-up person by the designated time of either 3:00pm or 6:00 pm. It is disruptive to the program when a 3:00 pm pick-up child remains beyond his/her hours, and it is unfair to program staff when they are forced to postpone their own plans to remain beyond program hours to provide supervision for a child awaiting pick-up. Accordingly, the following policy has been adopted:

#### **For 3:00 pm dismissal Kindergarteners:**

At 3:10 pm... \$10  
At 3:20 pm... \$25  
At 3:30 pm... \$35  
After 3:30pm.\$45

#### **For 6:00 pm dismissal children:**

At 6:01 pm... \$10  
At 6:10 pm... \$25  
At 6:20 pm... \$35  
At 6:30 pm... \$45

If a child is not picked up and needs to be dropped off at another BCAP parent's home, the address and phone number will be taped to the outside program door. Such drop off of children will only occur after program staff have been unsuccessful in attempts to contact all of the individuals listed on the Child Information Form. The charge for dropping off a child is \$50. All fees for managing children after 6:00 pm are collected by the program but paid to the staff person who stays late in order to care for the child.

Parents will be required to enter into a written agreement with the Director if they or a designated pick-up person is seriously or habitually late (either after 3:00pm or 6:00pm). This agreement will outline conditions for the child's continued enrollment in the program. This will include the understanding that if the parent or a designated pick-up person is late once more, the child's participation in the program will be terminated.

## **CHANGE OF PARENT AND EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

The ability of BCAP staff to reach someone who is responsible for a child in the program can be important under many circumstances. Parents must inform BCAP immediately of changes in their address, home or work phone numbers, and the names, address, and phone numbers of all emergency contacts.

## **NOTIFICATION OF CHILD ABSENCE**

The BCAP telephone number is (617) 965-1518. A phone call or written notification is required if a child will be absent from BCAP or has a change in his/her regular schedule. Do not rely on the school staff to relay messages to BCAP. **Even if a child is absent from school, the program must be contacted.** A fee of \$10 will be assessed if program staff have to initiate a call to confirm change of plans or absence.

## **TUITION**

A \$70 one-time, non-refundable registration fee is required to enroll in the program. Tuition is based on 37 weeks of program operation, divided into 10 equal payments due monthly, beginning on July 25th and ending on April 25th. February and April school vacation weeks are not included in the tuition computation. These weeks are run as separate programs. Unless advance arrangements have been made with the program, payments received seven or more days late are automatically assessed a \$10 late charge.

In July a packet is sent to parents that includes payment slips to assist in keeping current on tuition payments. BCAP does not provide invoices, but payment summaries are provided upon request.

BCAP will suspend a child's enrollment if tuition payments are 2 months in arrears. Reinstatement will require that the balance is paid or a payment plan is implemented (see Special Financial Circumstances). Outstanding accounts will be referred to legal counsel and/or an outside agency for collection. All fees related to the collection of outstanding balances will be the responsibility of the parent.

Methods of Payment. Payment can be made in the form of a check or money order, either in person or by mailing BCAP at PO Box 66273, Auburndale, MA 02466. Payment also can be placed in the mailbox at the program entrance door. A fee of \$20 will be charged for returned checks. After two returned checks, payment in the form of money order or cash will be required.

Special Financial Circumstances. BCAP is committed to helping families keep their children in childcare despite financial hardship. Parents are encouraged to speak with the Director regarding existing or anticipated difficulties with tuition payments so that assistance and/or a payment plan can be arranged. It is very important that parents notify the Director as soon as possible about financial issues and that agreed upon arrangements are followed. Failure to uphold such arrangements can result in termination from the program.

Tuition Assistance. The program maintains a Tuition Assistance Account designated for use to aid families in financial need. Fees collected by the program as penalties for failure to comply with policies (e.g. no sign-out; late payment; etc.) are directed to this account. More information and Tuition Assistance applications are included in the packet sent to parents in July.

## **DONATIONS**

BCAP has no funding sources other than tuition, therefore, donations are welcomed. These can be general contributions or specifically directed to purposes such as tuition assistance. As a non-profit organization, all charitable contributions to the program may be tax deductible (consult your tax advisor for specific guidance).

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM OR CHANGE IN SCHEDULE**

Withdrawal from the program or change in a child's schedule that reduces hours at BCAP will not result in a refund or credit for any payments already made to the program. Any tuition change will only take effect on the next payment due date.

Schedule changes that increase hours or shift time slots are subject to program space availability.

All schedule requests must be made in writing on a Change of Schedule form that can be obtained from the Program Director. A \$20 change fee must accompany all requests to cover administrative costs.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

The success of the afterschool program depends upon good communication and mutual support between parents and program staff. Parents are encouraged to ask questions or express concerns at any time. BCAP staff will look to parents for information about a child's needs, interests, and behavior. To help staff respond sensitively and effectively to each child, it is very important that parents make them aware of any changes in family life that may impact a child's behavior or emotional state. Staff will, in turn, communicate regularly with parents about the program and their child's experience at BCAP.

## **CONFERENCES**

Conferences with the Director and staff can be scheduled whenever the need or desire arises. Parents can ask the Director for a conference to obtain more information about a child's participation at the program, or when it is important to share information about what is happening at home or school.

## **PARENT VISITS**

Parent visits to BCAP are welcome. Any parent whose schedule allows is encouraged to spend part of the afternoon at the program sometime during the year. This could include sharing an interest or activity with the children. We ask that you keep in mind during pickup and when visiting the program that some children are nervous and shy with unfamiliar adults.

## **PARENT AND BOARD MEETINGS**

The annual parent meeting takes place in the Fall soon after the program begins a new year. This meeting gives staff a chance to hear parents' priorities, and parents and staff the opportunity to get to know one another.

Board meetings are held approximately once every six weeks. In keeping with Board responsibility for overall program operation, meeting agendas address matters of policy, finance, staffing, and decision making about issues that arise throughout the year. The Board is also advisory to the Director on operational matters for which she seeks input and guidance.

## **PARENT CONCERNS**

A parent who has a program-related concern should discuss it first with the staff person most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, it should be discussed next with the Director who may arrange a meeting with the parent and staff person. If the problem has not been resolved through these steps, a meeting including the parent, a Board member, the Director, and the staff person will be arranged.

## **BABYSITTING**

BCAP staff are professional care child providers. As a matter of policy, they do not provide individual babysitting services to our BCAP families.

## **FOOD AND SNACKS**

Occasionally, children will eat lunch at the program. BCAP suggests including fruits and vegetables, low-fat meats, and grains for the meal. Snack is provided to all children in the program every day at 3:00 pm. Snack items include breakfast bars, cookies, crackers, cheese, and fruit juices. Children are free to snack on fruits and vegetables provided by BCAP throughout the day until 5:00 pm. BCAP staff cannot prepare food or use a conventional or microwave oven to heat up food for children.

## **PROGRAM CHECK-IN AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Kindergarten Coordinator escorts Burr School Kindergartners to the program every day. The program assumes responsibility for the Kindergarten children when they check in with the Coordinator.

Burr children in grades 1-5 arrive at BCAP by unsupervised walk. BCAP assumes responsibility for these children when they check in with the attendance person who is seated at the snack table or with the OK Coordinator who is in the OK area. Transportation is not provided to or from the program.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*[Note: A copy of the full BCAP health care policy is available upon request.]*

Accidents and Emergencies. All staff are trained in first aid and CPR. In the event of a minor accident, a staff person will administer first aid and leave an Accident Report form in the child's mailbox to notify parents about

the event. If an injury or illness requires medical attention, a parent will be contacted immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called.

In an emergency situation, 911 will be activated and a staff person will accompany the child to the hospital. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible about the situation and the hospital the child will be taken to.

Illness and Lice. Children attending BCAP are expected to be well enough to participate in all activities. Parents need to make other child care arrangements if a child is not well enough to fully participate. If a child becomes ill at the program or is found to have a contagious condition, the parent or emergency contact person will be expected to pick up the child immediately. A child must be free of fever (100 F or over) for 24 hours in order for him/her to be admitted back into the program. Staff will notify parents of contagious conditions at BCAP. Parents are requested to please notify staff if a child has a contagious condition.

If a child does not attend school on a particular day, s/he cannot attend BCAP on the same day without prior agreement of the Program Director (e.g., arranged by telephone).

If it is discovered that a child has lice, both the parents and school will be notified. Parents are expected to pick up their child immediately. (There is shampoo specifically designed to kill lice and nits; the Program Director can provide information.) The child must be free of lice in order to be admitted back into the program. The Burr school nurse checks for lice and BCAP follows his/her recommendations.

Medication. BCAP staff cannot administer prescription or nonprescription medication without written parental authorization and a written order of a physician (which may be the label), indicating the child's name, name of the drug, and directions for its administration. Unused medication will be disposed of or returned to the parent.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE or NEGLECT**

*[Note: All staff members have copies of these procedures.]*

Any suspected or reported institutional abuse will be handled in the following way:

1. The staff person is reported to the Director or to the Board President if the Director is alleged to be involved.
2. The Director gives the staff person the opportunity to discuss the allegation with the appropriate people.
3. The Director must report to the President regarding the allegation and subsequent discussions with the staff person, the child, and the parent.
4. The Director and President will arrange a meeting to gather all relevant facts, determine the validity of the allegation, and make the proper referrals.
5. If the allegation is deemed credible, the Director will call the Office of Early Education and Care to investigate and will file a 51A report on behalf of the child with the Department of Social Services.
6. The staff person will be required to take a leave of absence until the investigation has been completed and a determination has been made by the Office of Early Education and Care.

### **SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Staff at BCAP are mandated reporters and are required by law to file a report if there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. All suspected incidents of abuse or neglect will be handled in the following manner:

1. The staff person will inform the Director as immediately as possible.
2. The Director will inform the Department of Social Services and file a verbal report.
3. Within 48 hours, the call must be followed up by a written report (form 51A) from the Director.
4. The Director must notify the Office of Early Education and Care immediately after filing a 51A report.

A staff person may file a 51A report themselves if the Director has not done so. This can be done without fear of disciplinary or other adverse action against the staff person.

### **REFERRALS**

Occasionally families need additional services of various types. BCAP can provide parents with a list of sources for social, mental health, educational, medical, dental, and vision services. The BCAP written referral service plan is available to any parent upon request. The program will assist in any referral that the parent wishes to pursue. Parental consent is needed prior to all referrals.

## **CHILD GUIDANCE**

The main aims of child guidance practices at BCAP are to provide guidance and support to children. This is accomplished by helping to develop self-discipline, maximizing the child's growth and development, protecting the group and the individuals within it, offering choices, providing opportunity to verbalize feelings, and encouraging self-control through understanding.

A consistent, well-articulated, and respectful system of discipline helps children understand and accept the importance of considerate individual and group behavior. As children grow, so do their responsibilities for their actions and behaviors within BCAP.

With clear expectations established, staff respond to inappropriate behavior according to the situation and child or children involved. A child may be directed to another activity, asked to rectify the problem his/her behavior has caused, or asked not to participate in a particular activity where the inappropriate behavior exists. As appropriate, a child may be asked to take a brief "time out" from an activity.

No child shall be subjected to abuse or neglect, or to cruel, unusual, severe, or corporal punishment. Children will not be subjected to verbal abuse; force feeding; ridicule or humiliation; denial of food, rest, or bathroom facilities; punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet; or punishment related to eating or not eating food.

## **BURR SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS**

It is program policy not to allow children to attend BCAP while under suspension from school. Days missed due to suspension are considered like other absence days and are not subject to tuition refund.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION**

Child Misconduct. BCAP defines a serious disciplinary problem as one in which a child is hampering the smooth flow of the program by requiring inordinate one-on-one attention; is inflicting serious physical or emotional harm on other children; has put the safety of the children and/or staff at risk; or is otherwise unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the program.

When a child's behavior becomes difficult or disruptive, staff will:

1. Notify the parent, both verbally and in writing, of the child's problematic behavior.
2. Solicit the parent's insights into the causes of the behavior and establish a plan of action. (The director may also determine that the child must stay home for a few days if the problem behavior caused, or could have resulted in, physical or emotional harm to a child or staff.)
3. With parental permission, talk to other adults working with the child concerning the plans for addressing the problem behavior.

If the behavior has not improved or if a single incidence of serious misconduct occurs, the child will be discontinued from the program. BCAP staff will help prepare the child for such termination from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability and understanding. The parent will be notified verbally and in writing of the reason for the termination.

Upon request, BCAP will make available to parents information concerning referral for services to address the behavioral problems at issue.

Parent Misconduct. Respectful communication and behavior are essential to program operation. Parent behavior that is aggressive, unsafe, or otherwise deemed inappropriate by the Board and Directors of BCAP is grounds for exclusion of that person from program involvement and, if necessary, termination of enrollment in the program. Behavior that would be deemed inappropriate includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal or physical attacks on the Director, staff, parents, and or children of the program.
- Behavior that is perceived as threatening or that creates uncertainty about the safety of anyone affiliated with the program.