

**NORTHEAST  
KIDS COUNT, INC.**

Northeast Elementary School  
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# Parent HANDBOOK

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
Program Goals	3
<b>Corporate Structure</b>	<b>3</b>
Registration	4
Tuition	4
Non-Payment Policy	5
Scholarships	6
Hours of Operation	6

Authorization of Child Pick Up	7
Emergency Contact Numbers	8
Health and Illness	8
Injuries	9
Communication	9
Photographs and Newsletter Publication	9
Behavior Guidelines	10
Discipline	10
General Removal Policy	12
Child Supervision	13
Emergency Evacuation Procedures	13
Programming	14
Daily Schedule	14
Lost and Found	15
CACFP Food Program	15
Holiday Schedule	16
Acknowledgement of Receipt/Review	17

**Welcome to Northeast KIDS COUNT, Inc. where the motto of Northeast Elementary, “*Everyone Counts in This Community,*” carries on during the after-school hours.**

We are pleased you have enrolled your child(ren) in the Northeast KIDS COUNT (KIDS COUNT or the Program) after-school program. We look forward to serving you and your family. We are a not-for-profit organization overseen by a parent Board of Directors. Your participation in the Program is encouraged at all levels.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our Program and the policies and procedures which will affect you and your child(ren). Please read this manual carefully. It contains information that is pertinent to the care your child receives. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Program Director or a member of the Board of Directors.

## **Mission Statement**

We at KIDS COUNT are committed to creating a safe, warm and enriched environment which supports and promotes the intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth and development of each child. We strive to build a sense of community and involvement.

## **Program Goals**

KIDS COUNT is dedicated to helping children grow and flourish in all areas of their development. It is our commitment to treat each child as a unique individual, with his or her own thoughts, feelings, interests, backgrounds and beliefs. The staff at KIDS COUNT will strive to create an environment which enriches each child's growth and positive development.

KIDS COUNT is dedicated to creating a positive and enriching environment. The Program will have safety rules for each area, plenty of space for children to run and play, rest and be still, interact with peers, and a quiet area for educational and homework activities. KIDS COUNT staff will make sure that there are an adequate number of age-appropriate games, toys, books, puzzles, large-motor supplies and art supplies.

It is our belief that setting up such an environment will encourage children to succeed.

## **KIDS COUNT's Corporate Structure**

KIDS COUNT is a not-for-profit corporation. The members of the corporation are you - the parents and/or guardians of the children attending the Program. All members of the corporation have voting rights at the Annual General Meeting held each June.

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the KIDS COUNT after-school program. The Board's function is to oversee the fiscal and programmatic operation of the Program. The Board consists of volunteer parents or guardians of children currently enrolled in the Program, and other community members who wish to participate. The Board holds regular monthly meetings at the Northeast School or other locations as needed. The members of the corporation elect new Board members at the Annual General Meeting.

## Registration Information

Enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Siblings of currently-enrolled children are given priority for the new school year. A waiting list is maintained if there are no available spaces in the Program. Meeting state-mandated ratios of students to staff, and space use criteria are of prime concern when considering enrollment numbers.

KIDS COUNT is open to all and does not discriminate based on race, gender, religion, color, age, sex, sexual orientation or national origin.

Should you decide to withdraw your child from the Program for any reason, we require a minimum 4 weeks written notice. To receive your \$100 deposit, all other fees must be paid in full. Deposits cannot be deducted from your final payment. In the case of having more than one child in the Program, the \$100 family deposit will be refunded when the last child has left the Program.

For families enrolling after the start of the school year, your first month's tuition will be prorated to either the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. For example, A child enrolling between October 1<sup>st</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup> would be responsible for the full month tuition rate. A child enrolling October 16<sup>th</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup> would be responsible for ½ the monthly tuition rate for the month. This refers to new enrollments only.

For families leaving/withdrawing during the school year, the monthly tuition will be prorated to either the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. For example, a child leaving between January 1<sup>st</sup> – January 15<sup>th</sup> would be responsible for ½ the monthly tuition rate. A child leaving January 16 – January 31<sup>st</sup> would be responsible for full tuition for the month.

### REMINDERS:

- We require a minimum 4 weeks written notice for all withdrawals.
- All tuition must be paid in full before your \$100 deposit will be returned to you.

## Tuition

Tuition rates may change from year to year. Northeast Kids Count, Inc., does not enroll on a part-time basis.

Tuition rates may include full-day care on school holidays during which we are open for business. Scheduled full-day care to be determined each semester/year.

Tuition statements are available by the first of each month. Please let the Director know if you would like printed invoices monthly. Yearly statement summaries are also available by request. Payments in the form of check or money order should be made out to "Northeast KIDS COUNT, Inc." and are due by the 5th of each month unless otherwise noted. You may also submit cash or Venmo tuition payments. Our Venmo profile can be found here: @Northeast-KidsCount. Prepayment of tuition is welcome; please contact us if you are interested in prepaying quarterly or annually. For families enrolling after the start of the school year, your first month's tuition will be prorated to either the 1st or the 15th of the month. This refers to new enrollments only.

If your tuition is 60 days in arrears, your child will not be allowed to attend the Program until payment arrangements are made. Delinquent accounts will be sent to collection, and parents will be responsible for late service fees of 1.5% a month and any collection fees.

## **Non-payment policy**

Kids Count relies on tuition dollars to pay staff and program expenses. Tuition is due even if your child does not attend the program. There is no tuition credit for absences due to illness, travel or other after school activities. Families still pay tuition for snow days, emergency closings and inclement weather days. Families are also responsible for making tuition payments to remain in the program if the program is closed due to an emergency long term school/Kids Count closure. Accounts that are not paid in full by the end of each month will be discussed with the Kids Count Board of Directors, but family identity will be kept confidential. If a past due account is not paid in full by the fifteenth of the following month, the child or children will not be permitted to attend Kids Count on their next scheduled program day. The account will then be turned over to a collection agency. Once the account has been turned over to a collection agency, all payments must be made to the collection agency; Kids Count can no longer accept payments until the account has been paid. Your child will not be able to re-enroll in Kids Count until the collection agency notifies Kids Count that the past debt has been paid in full. Space must also be available at Kids Count before a child will be re-enrolled. Families who have had their children dropped from the program will forfeit their tuition deposit.

## **Scholarship Information**

Northeast KIDS COUNT may provide tuition discounts to families which may not be eligible for assistance through other programs or grants. Tuition assistance will be based on an annual review, independent of prior year's assistance determinations. For more information, please refer to the scholarship application.

## **Hours of operation**

The Kids Count Program ends at 5:30 p.m., please make all necessary arrangements to pick up your child by this time. After 5:30 p.m., every effort will be made to reach parents by telephone if their child(ren) have not been signed out of the program. Families who are repeatedly late will receive a late fee of \$25 each time they are between 1 minute and 15 minutes late (after 5:30 pm). After 15 minutes (5:45 p.m.), the parents will incur an additional \$50 fee. After 30 minutes (6:00 p.m.), if no contact has been made with parents, the director will contact the family's first emergency contact in an effort to make contact with a parent or guardian. Repeated late pickups may result in removal from the program at the discretion of the director. We understand that "things" happen, but it is a parent's responsibility to pick up his or her child(ren) on time or make arrangements to have the child(ren) picked up in case the parent will be delayed past 5:30 p.m. Counselors have their own families and commitments to attend to, and their valuable time must be respected.

KIDS COUNT parent pick up is done via phone request. Please call either our landline or our cell phone to request your child/ren for pick up. If the line is busy or if you do not get an answer on the cell phone, please keep calling. It gets very busy and we do not have time to check the messages that come in during peak pick up times. Landline – 607-257-9400 Cell – 607-279-9414.

Other pick-up methods may occur, such as the in-person sign-out desk currently set up outdoors by the bicycle rack outside NorthEast. Parents are asked to park in a spot at the front lot, walk to the desk and ask the KidsCount staffer there to check out their child. Please be prepared to show ID if the staffer is not familiar with you. These changes in pick-up procedures will be announced by KidsCount well in advance. Parents' cooperation is expected and greatly appreciated.

KIDS COUNT follows Ithaca City School District policy for school closures. In case of early school closure due to inclement weather or emergency, there will be no KIDS

COUNT after school that day. Parents are reminded to check for updates throughout the day if weather conditions deteriorate after school is in session. If it becomes necessary for KIDS COUNT to close because of an emergency, parents will be notified by phone and email and must pick up their child within one hour. Please check your local source for emergency closures.

## **Person authorized to pick up child**

In your registration packet you have indicated who has your permission to pick up your child. This should include any sibling allowed to pick up your child. Under no circumstances will your child be released from our care to someone not authorized by you. Updates to authorized persons can be made via electronic mail to the program Director. Should you wish to list people who may NOT pick up your child, due to custody disputes or other reasons, please be sure to make this information clear and explicit in your registration materials. Any person(s) authorized to pick up your child, other than parents or legal guardians, will be required to show a picture ID before the child is released to their care.

### **Pick-up Procedure**

- When someone designated by a child's parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child, staff will ask that person for photo identification.
- All children must be requested for pick up by their parent, guardian or other authorized adult upon leaving the Program for the day.
- At the end of the day the Director will go through all Attendance Sheets to assure that all children were properly signed out.
- Visitors must sign in and out in the Kids Count Visitor log. They will then be given a badge to identify them as such. The Program will use extreme discretion regarding visitors.

**Do not park in the fire lane outside the entrance to the building. Cars parked in the fire lane obstruct sight lines and create a dangerous situation for children crossing the street. Please park in the parking lot when picking up your**

**child(ren). Wait outside the building for your child to exit. Parents and guardians should not let themselves inside the building to wait.**

## **Emergency numbers**

It is critical that we have up-to-date contact information for you in case of emergency. Please inform us of any changes to your information as they happen. Yellow emergency cards will be reviewed twice per year. Please make sure all information is updated at that time.

## **Health and Illness**

Each child's immunization records must be current and presented upon enrollment. These should be on file with the Northeast Elementary School health office. Please be sure to note any allergies or special medical conditions on your registration form.

We follow school policy regarding illness. If your child is absent from school due to illness, s/he may not come to after school that day. If your child is sent home from school due to illness, s/he may not return to the Program that day. If your child becomes ill while in our care, we will notify you and ask that you pick up your child as soon as possible. If you are unable to pick your child up due to illness, please have a backup plan in place so that your child can be picked up by someone else.

Your child will need to go home if s/he displays one or more of the following symptoms:

- Have or have had a temperature of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Pink eye
- Skin rashes
- Any communicable disease
- If your child should show sudden physical or emotional distress for which we are unable to determine the cause

These policies are in place for the sake of your child, the other children and their families, the staff and everyone at the school.

Northeast KIDS COUNT adheres to all ICSD and state and local mandates regarding COVID-19.



## **Injuries**

If your child becomes injured while at KIDS COUNT s/he will be treated according to the severity of the injury. Injury reports will be completed, and you will be asked to sign the report, stating that you have seen and understand it. After you have signed it, you may request a copy. If an injury occurs that requires medical attention, we will notify you immediately. If you are unavailable, we will contact a person listed on the emergency contact information page in your registration packet.

## **Communication**

Communication is the key to a successful program. Please touch base daily with the staff and/or Director to develop a relationship with them. The parent and/or Director may schedule conferences as the need arises. Your input into this Program is important. Several times a year we will ask for your input on programming, staff evaluation and Program evaluation. Please respond to these requests, as this will help us make the Program better.

We welcome comments or suggestions to improve our Program. When a problem or an area of concern arises, it should be brought to the attention of the Director who will listen to your suggestions and/or grievance and attempt to work through the problem. If your issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should bring it to the attention of a Board Member whose contact information is available upon request. The director can be reached via email, confidentially, at [directorkidscountne@yahoo.com](mailto:directorkidscountne@yahoo.com).

In addition, please inform the Director or Assistant Director of any special needs your child may have that might bear on his or her ability to participate in the day-to-day activities of the Program, or easily comply with the behavioral guidelines. When possible, we will attempt to accommodate special needs and/or develop behavioral plans to support successful participation in the Program.

## **Photographs and Newsletter Publication**

Each year parents will be asked to provide written permission to KIDS COUNT to take photographs of their child(ren) to be used for promotional or other legitimate reasons that serve the interests of KIDS COUNT. Each year parents will also be asked to

provide written permission for their child to be interviewed for the KIDS COUNT newsletter, a publication which is written by KIDS COUNT staff and distributed to parents for informational purposes.

## **Behavior Guidelines**

Staff shall provide each child with guidance that helps him or her acquire a positive self-concept and encourage self-discipline. Behavior guidance always is to be constructive, positive and suited to the age of the child.

The following rules and standards shall apply, although this list is not all-inclusive:

- All children have the right to learn, have fun and be safe.
- Good manners and appropriate behavior are always encouraged and modeled by children and staff.
- Standard school rules will apply at all times unless authorized by the Board of Directors.
- There will be no horseplay or running in the cafeteria, hallways, or library. All large motor activities will be outside or in the gym.
- Likewise, quiet voices will be used in the cafeteria and library. Outdoor voices may be used in the gym and outside.
- Inappropriate items brought to after school will be confiscated and returned to the parents upon pickup.

## **Discipline**

KIDS COUNT understands the responsibility and importance of creating an environment in which all children feel safe, both physically and emotionally. KIDS COUNT also believes in setting limits and ensuring the predictability of daily events to enable children to feel safe.

All staff, parents and children will be informed of these guidelines at the time of entry into the Program.

Staff will work with children to manage behavior. Staff may redirect, help the child label his/her feelings, act as a mediator between children, and support children emotionally as well as physically to ensure the safety of the child and others. Any consequence given **MUST** reflect the behavior observed (ex. Fighting in the gym may result in a child's removal from the gym). Any situation resulting in emotional or physical harm toward another child will be properly documented and shared with the involved children's families. In such cases, the confidentiality of the children involved will be

respected. Repeated abusive, degrading, racist, or humiliating behavior will result in a child's removal or suspension from the Program.

Staff will document all behavior-related incidents on incident forms for parent notification. In addition, the Director will maintain a behavior log in each child's file as needed to document behavior and disciplinary actions.

### Grounds for Discipline

- Fighting: hitting or causing deliberate physical harm to staff or students
- Disruptive Behavior: compromising the education process or diminishing the authority of KIDS COUNT staff (may include inappropriate or threatening language, deliberately not following directions, engaging in activities that undermine staff or activities)
- Bullying: inflicting physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on another, or ostracizing another child
- Hazing: engaging in or encouraging humiliating, degrading, abusive or dangerous activities to join a group, regardless of the child's willingness to participate
- Unsafe Behavior: acting in a way that endangers themselves, other children or staff or bringing objects to school that may cause harm
- Destroying Property: willfully destroying school, KIDS COUNT, or other children's property
- Other unacceptable behavior may include theft, sexual harassment, racial slurs, etc.

According to New York State law, the following guidelines will be used when a child needs to be disciplined:

- Any discipline used must relate to the child's action and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.
- Isolating a child in any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a staff member is prohibited.
- When a child's behavior harms or is likely to harm the child, others, or property, or seriously disrupts the group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group until self-control is regained. The staff member must guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited.
- Methods of discipline or interaction that frighten, demean, or humiliate a child are prohibited.
- Any discipline must be administered and supervised by KIDS COUNT staff.
- Physical intervention between staff and child is permitted for short term, immediate prevention of injury to him/herself or to remove child from danger to him/herself or others.

The misuse of any of these methods by any staff member, volunteer or visiting parent/guardian will be reported to the proper agency immediately.

### Disciplinary Action

- Disciplinary action for any offense besides fighting will follow these procedures:
  - Verbal warning
  - Time out
  - Removal from activity or loss of privileges related to activity
  - Written warning to student and parent
  - One day suspension
  - Short-term suspension
  - Removal from Program
- We have a zero tolerance for physical aggression. The following steps will be taken if children are fighting:
  - Serious written and verbal warning
  - One day suspension
  - One week suspension
  - Parent conference with Director and Board Member
  - Removal from Program

## **General removal policy**

The Kids Count Director reserves the right to terminate a child(ren) from the program or deny enrollment in the program based upon inappropriate conduct of the child(ren) and/or parent/guardian(s) which the Kids Count Director deems in his or her sole discretion to be detrimental to the program. No appeal lies from the decision of the program director. However, an aggrieved parent, whose child(ren) is terminated from the program or denied enrollment in the program, may in writing appeal to the Parent Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, by majority vote, may uphold and/or modify the decision of the director. No formal hearing shall be allowed from the decision of the program director denying a child's enrollment or terminating a child(ren) from the program herein.

## **Child Supervision Policy**

At the beginning of the day staff will take the attendance of each child in their grade level. Staff will immediately report to the Director or designated supervisor any children who are not in attendance. The Director will then go directly to the Northeast Elementary School Office and inquire as to the whereabouts of the child. If the child remains unaccounted for, a call will be placed to the child's family to inquire as to the child's whereabouts. If a child cannot be located and all of the above do not know where the child is, a call will be made to 911. The President of the Board will also be notified.

KIDS COUNT will strictly always adhere to a 1:10 counselor to child ratio throughout the day. All staff will carry a two-way radio to inform others of a child's departure and arrival between areas. When an area is closing, a staff member will scan the area and make sure that all children have left.

## **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

KIDS COUNT follows all Northeast School Policies. In the event of an emergency evacuation at KIDS COUNT, the following shall occur: Upon hearing the alarm, the staff supervising each area will immediately call all children within the area to line up at the closest emergency exit. They will then lead the children to the farthest basketball court behind the school. The directors will check bathrooms and inform others over radios. Staff in the library will check the library bathroom. The directors will take the attendance boards outside. The directors will take the "yellow cards," which will contain all needed information and supplies. Staff members will either appoint another staff or lead children to the nearest emergency exit and to the basketball court. Once all staff and children have arrived at the basketball court, each staff member will be given the appropriate Attendance Board and have those children line up behind him/her. Staff will hold Attendance Boards up when all children in their grade level are accounted for. The Director will then go down the rows of staff and children making sure that all children are accounted for. If a child is missing, the Director and one other counselor will search the aforementioned areas again and call 911 if the child cannot be found.

KIDS COUNT will perform two Shelter in Place drills per year. During these drills, children will be kept in a safe location, with adequate supplies including activities, snacks, and water. Children and staff will have access to working toilets and sinks. These drills are intended to enhance preparation in the case of natural disaster in which a parent or guardian may be unable to access the building. Parents will be notified prior to the day during which the drill will take place.

## Programming

The following guidelines have been developed by the Board of Directors' Programming Committee in response to input from KIDS COUNT parents:

- Each day should offer some unique activity to the children that can range from extremely simple to complex. This activity is the choice of the Director and staff.
- The program will invite special guests from our parent group or community to visit and present interesting programming to the children.
- Clubs, clubs and more clubs!! Various clubs may be formed based on student interest with staff mentoring. These clubs will meet once weekly for one hour for 6–12-week sessions, or longer pending committee approval. Clubs may include, but need not be limited to, trading cards, chess, checkers, cooking, arts, drama, painting, sewing, science, and badminton.
- All electronics, unless associated directly with homework (i.e. Chromebooks), are prohibited during program hours. Trading cards, Pokemon, and other card games are restricted to Fridays unless previously authorized. All children and families must understand that it is a privilege to bring these items to school for use during the Program. If these items are used during school hours, the privilege to bring them in for after-school clubs will be lost.
- Field trips may be offered on some full days. Parents must complete a permission slip in advance. Occasionally, a fee will be charged to cover admission or transportation. Trips may include visits to museums, parks, orchards/farms, athletic facilities, etc.

## Daily Schedule

- 2:00 -Arrival of children. Children check in with their grade-level counselor in the cafeteria.
- “First Choice” The children may choose from a variety of activities held in the cafeteria, library, gym, or outside. “Homework Club” for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders will be held in the library. The gym is open for kindergarten, first and second grade students only.
- 3:15-3:45 - Snack is served in the cafeteria or outside
- “Second Choice” The children choose from a variety of structured activities. “Homework Club” for younger students begins in the library, and the gym is open for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students only. “Third Choice” The children are finishing activities

and projects they are working on in the cafeteria. The gym is now open for individual free choice, and the library continues to be open for homework or quiet reading.

- 5:15 -Clean up. Both staff and children are responsible for helping.
- 5:30 -Final Pick up. Have a wonderful night!!

## **Lost and Found**

KIDS COUNT is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items brought from home, including but not limited to toys, money, and clothing. We encourage children to leave their valuables at home. It is the responsibility of parents to supervise what their child brings from home and the responsibility of the child to keep items safe. Please label everything with your child's name. We will have a lost and found box separate from the school lost and found box where items found during after school will be put.

## **Food Program**

KIDS COUNT participates in New York State's Child and Adult Care Food Program. By recording the number of meals served, we receive a monthly reimbursement for the snacks provided. This helps to keep our costs lower and enables us to offer more affordable childcare.

The food program requires families to sign a form every year stating that their child attends KIDS COUNT. There is an optional space to indicate family income. When families who are deemed "low income," according to the state's guidelines, supply their family income information, the state reimburses KIDS COUNT at a higher rate than if no income amount was reported. Irrespective of your family's income, reporting your income on the food program form is optional. KIDS COUNT will be reimbursed a small amount for every student who returns the form, regardless of income.

## **Holiday Schedule**

Please refer to the KIDS COUNT calendar, handed out at the beginning of the year for exact dates of these full days.

KIDS COUNT \*may\* be open for care on the following full days:

Teacher/parent/guardian conference days  
Superintendent conference days  
Indigenous People's Day  
Veteran's Day  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
February break  
April break  
Juneteenth

**We are closed on the following days:**

Thanksgiving Wednesday, Thursday and Friday  
December 26 - January 2  
Memorial Day  
Early Release Drill Day



## **Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review of Parent Handbook**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ have received and reviewed a copy of the KIDS COUNT Parent Handbook. I understand the policies contained therein and agree to abide by them. I understand that these policies may change without advance notice at the discretion of the Director or Board of Directors, and that I will be made aware of such changes in a timely manner.

Signature

Date