



Gretna Kids Connection Before & After School Program

Parent Handbook

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Gretna Public Schools Foundation
11717 South 216th Street
Gretna, NE 68028

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Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to your family as you join the Gretna Kids Connection Program. Our primary goal is to offer before and/or after-school childcare in a familiar setting, ensuring planned activities, high-quality care, and excellent supervision, all while prioritizing fun for the children.

The program boasts a convenient location and competitive pricing. Each site rigorously adheres to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services standards for childcare centers and consistently meets inspection requirements from both the Fire Marshall and the County Health Department.

Gretna Kids Connection is dedicated to supporting each child's educational and nutritional needs. A wholesome morning breakfast and an after-school snack are provided at no extra cost. Our Site Director meticulously plans a diverse range of activities to ensure an engaging childcare experience. These activities include supervised physical activities, fine motor skill activities like arts, crafts, and table games, opportunities to complete school assignments, free choice time, and outdoor play.

This Parent Handbook is designed to outline what you can expect from the Gretna Kids Connection Program and, in turn, what the program expects from you. Should any questions arise that are not clearly addressed within these pages, please do not hesitate to speak directly with the Program Director or the Gretna Public Schools Foundation.

The information in this handbook is subject to change at any time. If this occurs after you have signed the handbook, a notification will be sent via email, and/or a copy will be available on site for your signature.

We sincerely hope that your family's partnership with the Gretna Kids Connection will be an enriching and rewarding experience.

Sincerely, the Gretna Public Schools Foundation
and Gretna Kids Connection

About Us

Gretna Public Schools Foundation and Gretna Kids Connection

The Gretna Public Schools Foundation was established in October of 1990 with the mission to enhance the educational quality for the benefit of students and residents within the Gretna School District. In 2009, the Foundation Board made the pivotal decision to fund and implement Gretna Kids Connection, thereby establishing our before and after-school childcare program.

The GPS Foundation serves as a vital link, connecting those who wish to contribute their resources with the betterment of our schools and the children of the community who will ultimately benefit from this generosity. Guided by a dedicated Board of Directors, the GPS Foundation annually awards thousands of dollars in grants to teachers, provides scholarships to students and faculty, and offers funding for the Gretna Early Education Center. It also plays a crucial role in shaping programming that not only recognizes excellence in teaching and service across the schools but also advances our mission.

Mission of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation

Grow Student Opportunities

Provide Needed Resources

Support Public Education

Foster Community Impact

It is important to note that while the Gretna Public Schools Foundation is a tax-exempt organization legally separate from the Gretna Public Schools, it acts as the governing board overseeing all facets of Gretna Kids Connection. Gretna Kids Connection is not itself a tax-exempt program but is officially licensed as a childcare provider by the State of Nebraska.

Program Information

Licensing and Staff Qualifications

Gretna Kids Connection operates as a childcare program fully licensed by the State of Nebraska through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Our sites receive regular visits from a Licensing Resource Specialist to ensure ongoing compliance with Nebraska state regulations. To maintain a safe and manageable environment, the school-age child-to-adult ratio is set at 15:1. Our program primarily utilizes the gym, commons area, and stage facilities at each school location.

Our staff are the cornerstone of our program, chosen for their dedication, experience, and training. Every staff member aged 19 and older undergoes a thorough background check through the National Criminal History Record Check and completes the Child and Adult Protective Service Registry. Furthermore, all staff are required to participate in documented annual in-service training and maintain current CPR and First Aid certification, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Children Served

The Gretna Kids Connection Program prides itself on an inclusive admission policy, ensuring that we do not discriminate based on race, sex, religion, national origin, physical or mental abilities, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. We provide care for children from Kindergarten through 5th grade. During regular school days, children are required to attend the Gretna Kids Connection site associated with their registered school.

Enrollment criteria include that children must be toilet-trained and non-diapered, possess age-appropriate eating, dressing/undressing, and hygiene skills, including proper use of restroom facilities without assistance, and be able to adhere to the program rules outlined in this handbook. This includes Gretna Kids Connection's four expectations. 1. Listen and follow directions. 2. Hands, feet, and body to yourself. 3. Be kind with words and actions. 4. Ask permission to leave the group. They must also be able to function effectively in a group setting while maintaining the 15:1 child-to-adult ratio. Gretna Kids Connection retains the right to restrict admission or continued enrollment on a case-by-case basis if these conditions are not met.

Parents must disclose any special needs or accommodations their child may have during the registration process, so we can make individualized assessments as to each child's program needs. Failure to provide this critical information at the time of registration may result in removal from the Gretna Kids Connection Program. We assure families that all information provided will remain confidential, but it's essential for your child's safety and well-being that we receive such details so we can provide safe, appropriate and adequate care. We will take all information from the registration packet, and if a child necessitates a specialized care plan, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss their acceptance into the Program. Gretna Kids Connection Program must individually consider admission and accommodation on an individualized basis to determine whether it would be reasonable, result in undue burden, or in a direct threat to the Program.

Hours and Days of Operation

Gretna Kids Connection is a year-round program, operating on regular school days, non-school days, most snow days, and offering a full-day Summer Program. However, families should note that Gretna Kids Connection is closed on certain occasions and all major holidays. A detailed list of specific closure dates is provided later in this section and may change based on the yearly calendar.

The Gretna Kids Connection Program Office operates Monday through Friday, from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., though these hours may change if additional help is needed in the school buildings. During regular school days, our Kids Connection Sites are open Monday through Friday for morning care from 6:30 A.M. until school begins, and for after-school care from dismissal until 6:00 P.M. On consolidation days, snow/cold days, and during the Summer Program, designated sites are open from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.

Gretna Kids Connection observes the following holidays and will be closed on these dates: New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day. If one of these holidays falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday.

Additional Closed Days and Important Information

In addition to major holidays, Gretna Kids Connection will also be closed on two designated Staff Development days each school year, during which no care will be provided. These dates are specified in your annual tuition deduction calendar and are subject to change.

Gretna Kids Connection observes an annual closure period after the last day of school and before the first day of the summer program, and at the end of the summer program before the start of the new school year. This closure typically spans four days following the last day of school and four days preceding the first day of school, allowing time for registration preparation and coordination with the school district. Exact dates for these closures are provided with each program year's registration materials.

On the day of Kindergarten Round-up (typically the last Friday in February), when Gretna Kids Connection operates normally, school is still in session. However, care for current Kindergarteners will not be provided for the full day, as we do not offer full-day care on these specific dates. For children in other grades, both AM and PM care will operate as usual.

Online Resources and Enrollment

The Gretna Kids Connection provides a wealth of information and forms online at www.gretnaschoolsfoundation.org. Here, families can find important dates for Summer and School Year Registrations/Lotteries, as well as downloadable forms, including the Authorized Pick-Up form, Change of Status form, Rate Sheet, and Tuition Express form.

It is the parents' responsibility to promptly notify the Gretna Kids Connection Office of any changes to their employment, addresses, phone numbers, care and/or custody arrangements, email addresses, or any other critical account information.

To register for the Gretna Kids Connection Program, families must complete the Registration Form, the Parent Handbook/Payment Agreement Form, the Tuition Express Agreement Form, and the State of Nebraska DHHS Form. A non-refundable registration fee must also be paid, and current immunization records must be provided. Once all required paperwork is completed, it will be added to ProCare, and families will receive a confirmation email from the Gretna Kids Connection office verifying their start date.

Enrollment and Registration Procedures

Registration and lottery dates, along with specific rates for the summer and school year programs, are posted on the www.gretnaschoolsfoundation.org website during the first week of February each year for new and inquiring families. Current families will receive an email from the Gretna Kids Connection office during the same timeframe.

For current families, in-person registration events are held at the Gretna Public School Administration Building on specific days and times each year. This information is emailed out in early February, so it is crucial to keep your email address up to date with us. If you miss this registration window, your family will need to enter the lottery for new families, as Gretna Kids Connection does not automatically assume continued care year-to-year.

New families can access a Google Document for the lottery on the www.gretnaschoolsfoundation.org website for both Summer and the school year. The Gretna Kids Connection office will then communicate via email whether your child(ren) have been selected. Acceptance letters will include the necessary paperwork for you to complete. It's important to understand that due to state licensing requirements, each Gretna Kids Connection site has a limited capacity.

Registration Fees and Enrollment Categories

A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of each program registration. For the school year, this fee is \$25.00 per child, and for Summer registration, it is \$35.00 per child.

Families enrolling for the school year can choose from several enrollment categories: A.M. and P.M. care, A.M. Only care, or P.M. Only care. Tuition charges will vary by chosen category. For the Summer program, families also have two enrollment choices: Full-time (5 days) or Part-time (three days per week), with options for Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Enrollment in the summer program constitutes a full summer commitment and is billed weekly.

Tuition and Payments

Tuition Payments and Deductions

Tuition for Gretna Kids Connection is automatically deducted from either a checking/savings account or a credit card (please note, American Express is not accepted) through our Tuition Express system. Charges are typically deducted on the first and third Fridays of each month, or as specified on the annual tuition deduction calendar. Any charges for non-school days and snow days will be added to your regular tuition and automatically deducted. Your billing statements will clearly show the days your child(ren) were registered for and the total amount owed. The specific tuition amount is determined by the enrollment category your family has selected.

Regarding tuition deduction amounts, each enrollment category has an annual cost, which is then divided into 18 deductions. These deductions generally occur on the first and third Friday of the month. If a scheduled deduction falls on a holiday, it will be processed on the following Monday. It's important to remember that deduction amounts may fluctuate if consolidation days or snow days are added to your regular tuition schedule.

Tuition Express for Secure Payments

Tuition Express provides a secure and convenient method for automatic tuition deductions, drawing funds from your checking/savings account or credit card. This system enhances security with 128-bit encryption, offering a more secure alternative to writing checks. Please be aware that a 3.5% surcharge is applied to all credit/debit card payments. To avoid this surcharge, families can pay via ACH bank transfer.

All families must register with the Gretna Kids Connection program to set up their account for automatic tuition deductions through Tuition Express. At the initial registration, families will complete a Tuition Express Agreement Form and provide a voided check. This agreement form will be kept on file annually. Any changes to the account used for Tuition Express must be reported to the Gretna Kids Connection office, and a new form can be provided upon request. Changes to an account must be submitted at least two weeks (14 days) prior to a scheduled deduction.

Return Payment Policy and Outstanding Balances

In the event of a returned payment, Gretna Kids Connection will assess the following fees to your account: \$15.00 per transaction for ACH (checking/savings accounts) and \$5.00 per decline for credit cards. The Gretna Kids Connection office will notify you if a payment has been returned. Should Kids Connection receive notification of more than three (3) consecutive returned payments within one school year, your child(ren) may be removed from the program. If a child(ren) is removed and the account is subsequently paid in full, re-enrollment may be considered if there is no waitlist, at the sole discretion of Gretna Kids Connection.

For outstanding balances, if an account balance is overdue for more than five (5) business days from the billing date, we will contact the family to discuss payment options. If payment is not received within ten (10) business days from the billing date, Gretna Kids Connection reserves

the right to terminate care until the balance is paid in full and future payments are secured with a checking account or credit card. Failure to submit payment for all accrued tuition and associated fees will lead to account termination and the balance being sent to collections. Terminated accounts are subject to review for reauthorization by the Gretna Public Schools Foundation the following school year, with all determinations made at the Foundation's discretion.

Split Payments in Divorce Situations

Gretna Kids Connection is equipped to withdraw funds from two separate accounts only in divorce situations, splitting the amounts according to the percentage required by the divorce decree. However, if both parties fail to comply with the conditions set out in the divorce decree, it may result in the termination of one or both accounts or a reallocation of financial responsibilities. If one account is no longer valid or has been terminated, 100% of the tuition will be withdrawn from the other account. The paying party will be notified of these adjustments, and the Kids Connection will continue to withdraw 100% of the tuition from the remaining account until updated information is provided to the Gretna Kids Connection office.

Title 20 and Late Fees

Title 20 Child Care Subsidy Program

Gretna Kids Connection is proud to accept Title 20 from qualifying individuals, which is a childcare subsidy program provided by the State of Nebraska and administered through Nebraska Health and Human Services. To accept Title 20, families must have a current provider authorization form on file, complete a Tuition Express form, and provide a voided check from an approved bank account.

If Title 20 authorization expires, Gretna Kids Connection services will be suspended effective the day after the authorization expires. Families can reinstate childcare services by contacting the Gretna Kids Connection office with an active authorization date. Failure to receive re-authorization will result in immediate removal from the program unless families explicitly declare their intent to activate their account as self-pay. It is the family's responsibility to contact their caseworker to reauthorize services. If your authorization includes a family fee, these monthly fees must be paid to Gretna Public Schools Foundation, Gretna Kids Connection, for continued care.

Please note that Title 20 does not cover registration fees (unless specifically outlined in your contract), late fees, family fees, or extra activity fees. Should you choose to activate your account as self-pay, you must do so by contacting the Gretna Kids Connection office and submitting a written notification for approval. All charges accrued for self-pay services are non-refundable. Gretna Kids Connection will not honor backdated Title 20 authorization requests. Failure to secure Title 20 re-authorization or submit a request to transition to full self-pay from the first day of suspended services will result in removal from Gretna Kids Connection. Please note, Gretna Kids Connection has no responsibility in setting up services or for continued service. Once a family is removed, re-entry into the program will be at the discretion of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation board. Furthermore, if a Title 20 recipient does not attend Gretna Kids Connection as outlined in their registration packet, the program may bill through ProCare. If a child is absent for three consecutive days, Gretna Kids Connection is mandated to report this to your caseworker.

Late Pick-Up Fees

All children are expected to be picked up by 6:00 P.M. The clock located on the parent table computer at each site serves as the official timer for drop-off and pick-up times. Families will be charged late pick-up fees at a rate of \$20.00 per child for the first 15 minutes (6:01 P.M. - 6:15 P.M.), and an additional \$15.00 per child for each subsequent 15-minute increment (e.g., 6:16 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.).

Site Directors will provide families with a form detailing all assessed late pick-up fees and the date they will be deducted from your account. Families will not be permitted to use the program until they have signed this form. All late pick-up fees are deducted from your account in addition to tuition fees. Accumulating three late pick-up fee violations within one school year will result in immediate removal from the Kids Connection program. If a family is removed due to three late pick-up violations and wishes to return, re-admission will be at the discretion of the Gretna Kids Connection office. If, by 6:31 P.M., we are unable to contact parents, guardians, or other

authorized persons for pick-up, authorities will be notified, and the child(ren) will be reported as abandoned.

Federal Tax ID Number and Statements

For tax purposes, the Federal Tax ID number of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program is 36-3754393. All statements, including year-end tax statements, are accessible to parents via myprocare.com using the email provided on the registration form. Should you require the Gretna Public School Foundation Kids Connection to provide a year-end tax statement, a \$2 administrative fee will be charged per statement requested.

Status Changes

Any alteration to a child's registration status, such as changing from full-time (AM & PM) to part-time (AM only or PM only), necessitates completing a 'STATUS CHANGE FORM'. This form can be obtained from your Site Director or by request from the Gretna Kids Connection office. The form must be returned to the Gretna Kids Connection office. Please be aware that not all status change requests can be granted immediately due to our license capacity, and some may require placement on a waitlist until a spot becomes available.

Status changes typically require up to two weeks (14-days) to take effect before any billing adjustments occur. This two-week period commences once the Gretna Kids Connection office receives the signed Status Change Form. Families remain responsible for all incurred charges during this period, regardless of whether their children are attending Gretna Kids Connection. Refunds will not be issued after a deduction has been processed.

Withdrawal from the Kids Connection Program

If a family wishes to discontinue childcare services with the Gretna Kids Connection program, a two-week (14-day) written notice of withdrawal must be provided by completing our "STATUS CHANGE FORM." This form is available from your Site Director or by request from the Gretna Kids Connection office. Forms must be returned to the Gretna Kids Connection office. Parents are obligated to continue making payments of any tuition or fees to fulfill the two-week notice requirement, regardless of the child's attendance. Any charges incurred during this period are nonrefundable. If you withdraw from the program and later wish to re-enroll, you will be considered a new family.

The Foundation reserves the right to withdraw a child from the Gretna Kids Connection program. While reasonable steps will be taken to avoid termination, if providing care is no longer feasible, we will typically issue a two-week notice where possible. This advance notice courtesy, however, is null and void if the child is being removed for disciplinary reasons, as detailed in the "Disciplinary Policy." In such cases, parents remain responsible for payment for those two weeks, regardless if the tuition falls on or after removal from the program or the child(ren) does not attend. Gretna Kids Connection may terminate services for reasons including, but not limited to, failure to honor obligations listed in the Parent Handbook or other written policies, any offensive actions or language by parents or children that adversely affect the program, harassment of staff, lack of parental cooperation, failure to complete required forms, inability to meet the child's needs without one-on-one care, or failure to maintain a current account balance.

Your Child's Day

Program Planning and Activities

The Site Directors and staff at each Gretna Kids Connection site are responsible for meticulously planning age-appropriate, engaging weekly activities for children. The program offers a diverse range of structured and unstructured activities to enrich the daily schedule.

Children will have opportunities for Gross Motor activities, participating in organized games led by staff or engaging in free-play, both indoors and outdoors. Weather permitting, children are expected to play outdoors, so they must be dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions. If your child is unable to participate in outdoor play, please notify your Site Director. Additionally, Fine Motor skills are developed through various age-appropriate table games, arts, and crafts. The schedule also includes Free Choice Time, allowing children to select their own activities and interact with peers independently, fostering decision-making and social skills.

Supplies, Personal Items, and Electronics

Each Gretna Kids Connection site is well-equipped with a variety of developmentally appropriate supplies and materials to support all children in engaging in activities. These supplies are regularly inspected to ensure good condition, and any materials found to be in disrepair are immediately removed.

Children are discouraged from bringing any personal items from home, as Gretna Kids Connection provides ample equipment and supplies to meet their needs. The program does not assume responsibility if any personal items brought from home are lost, stolen, or broken. Similarly, electronic and technological devices such as phones, smartwatches, gizmos, and earbuds are not permitted. If a child brings such items, they will be requested to store them in their backpack or at the parent table for pick-up. If you need to contact your child during program hours, please call the Site Director. An exception is made for electronic devices necessary to monitor health conditions, in which case their use will follow the child's specific health plan.

If your child is missing any articles of clothing or personal property, please inquire at the Site as soon as possible. Unclaimed items will be placed in the school's lost and found. Gretna Kids Connection is not responsible for lost items.

Attendance (Drop-off) and Departure (Pick-up) Procedures

As per the Child Care State Regulations, for the morning program, your child(ren) must be escorted into the building and checked in at the parent table by a parent, guardian, or authorized person. Gretna Kids Connection is not responsible for your child(ren) until they are properly checked into the program. Repeated violations of this regulation may lead to termination of care. All sites open at 6:30 A.M., and children are dismissed to their teachers no later than 8:00 A.M., 30 minutes before the school bell rings at each site.

For PM Attendance, your child(ren) will be checked into the Gretna Kids Connection program within 10 minutes of the school dismissal bell ringing. If a child scheduled to attend in the

afternoon is not accounted for, the Gretna Kids Connection staff will initiate the "Missing Child Procedures" outlined in the "Supervision and Safety" section of this Handbook. It is requested that any changes to your child's dismissal attendance be communicated to your Site Director by 2:00 P.M. If a parent fails to do so, Gretna Kids Connection cannot be held responsible for the whereabouts of your child(ren). Classroom teachers and school office staff are not responsible for informing Gretna Kids Connection of your child(ren)'s attendance.

Children leaving a Gretna Kids Connection site must be signed out by a parent, guardian, or a person explicitly specified on the child's authorization list. For security and safety reasons, parents cannot call to request that an unauthorized individual sign their child out, nor can they request that their child walk home alone. This policy is detailed further in a subsequent section. Gretna Kids Connection staff members are not permitted to sign a child in or out of the program unless the parents have listed an employee as an authorized person on their registration pick-up list. Failure to walk your child(ren) into the building in the mornings or to check them out in the afternoons may result in removal from the program. Gretna Kids Connection will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time. A photo ID may be requested to verify the identity of anyone picking up a child. Sign-in/out records are maintained only for the current school year.

Child Release, and Health and Safety

It is our policy to release a child to any authorized parent / guardian unless we have a court order or divorce decree specifically prohibiting one parent or individual from having custody of the child. While the school may have a copy of such documentation, as a separate entity, Gretna Kids Connection requires its own copy for our records. Providing this information is imperative for your child(ren)'s safety and must be discussed with your child's Site Director and the Program Director. The Gretna Public Schools Foundation will not assume responsibility for children released to unauthorized individuals if the proper documentation is not on file.

Gretna Kids Connection has designated times for group restroom use, but children may use the restroom at other times with permission from a staff member. All children and staff are required to thoroughly wash and dry their hands before handling or consuming food, and after using bathroom facilities.

Meal Programs

A breakfast program is offered, with monthly menus available at each site, subject to change based on inventory or inclement weather. Breakfast meets state guidelines and is provided at no additional cost. Please check with your Site Director for serving times. An afternoon snack program is also provided, with monthly menus available at each site that meet state guidelines. Substitution snacks are available for children with special dietary needs. These needs must be listed at registration, and a doctor's note may be required. As a licensed childcare center, we are mandated to provide nutritious snacks that meet all state-required components, with no additional fees for breakfast, morning snack (if applicable), or afternoon snack.

School Day - Daily Schedule (example)

- Morning Schedule
 - 6:30 A.M.: Site Opens
 - 6:30 A.M.: Cartoons
 - 7:00 A.M.: Breakfast/Restroom/Hand Washing
 - 7:30 A.M.: Gym time or Table Activities
 - 7:30 A.M. - 8:00 A.M.: *Dismiss for school (*Dismissal times vary by school; AM kids are dismissed 30 minutes before the school bell rings.)

- Afternoon Schedule
 - 3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.: Attendance and Restrooms/Hand Washing
 - 3:45 P.M.: Afternoon Snack
 - 4:00 P.M.: Outside or Gym Time
 - 4:30 P.M.: Planned activities for the day
 - 5:30 P.M.: Free Choice Time in the commons area or the gym
 - 6:00 P.M.: Site Closes
 - *(Dismissal times for programs in A.M. and P.M. differ at each school.)*

Planned Activities

Each site has planned activities for the children. The activities can include, but are not limited to: group games, table activities, coloring, arts & crafts, science experiments, STEM activities, brain games, activity packets, reading activities, cooking activities, small group activities, movies/cartoons, and dramatic play.

Regarding movie times, Gretna Kids Connection only shows G or PG-rated films; please inform your Site Director if you prefer your child not to view movies.

No-School Days

The program will operate on no-school days and early release days. Sometimes, due to maintenance work, repairs, or low child(ren) attendance in one building, a site may need to be closed. If that situation occurs, parents will be notified as to which school their child(ren) will attend.

On No School days, parents will receive a Google Form in their email for registration. The Google form gives information about the no-school days and when the deadline is to sign up. Children will not be allowed to attend the no-school day(s) unless pre-registration is complete and submitted through the Google form by the due date. After the registration deadline, days cannot be added, changed, or removed. Charges are based on the days that you pre-register for, regardless of attendance, and charges are non-refundable. Please refer to the Gretna Kids Connection Rate Sheet for the current full-day care rates. No-school day charges are in addition to your regular tuition deduction and are added to the next billing cycle. Each child is required to bring a sack lunch on a no-school day.

Snow Days / Cold Days / Hours

If school is canceled due to weather conditions, Gretna Kids Connection will make every effort to open, however, there are many factors we must take into consideration. First and foremost is safety; the district's ability to remove snow at the designated sites or address other conditions that could pose a danger to the children, staff, or facility.

If school is closed due to weather conditions, the decision will usually be made by Gretna Public School District officials before 6:00 A.M. and announced on local radio and television stations. Parents will receive an email from the Gretna Kids Connection office as soon as possible, indicating whether the designated sites will be open or closed.

If the decision is that Gretna Kids Connection is open, the hours of operation would be from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. Please know that if the weather conditions continue to decline during the day, an email will be sent to the parents of children who are in attendance requesting the child(ren) be picked up at an earlier time. Snow days/Cold days are the only days that parents or guardians do not have to pre-register. Breakfast, A.M. snack, and P.M. snack will be provided as part of the full-day rate. You would be responsible for bringing a sack lunch for your child(ren). The full day rate will apply on snow days/cold days and will be added to the next billing cycle. Refer to your tuition deduction calendar. If Gretna Kids Connection is closed, you will not be billed for the full day of care, since these days are not a pre-register day.

Please know that if your child(ren) is asked to attend a school for a snow day/cold day that is not their home site, Gretna Kids Connection does their best to schedule staff from their home site at the designated snow day site from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., so the child(ren) have familiar faces to see.

***Medication Needs-** Please know that if your child is not attending their home school for a snow day/cold day, the parent will need to provide the needed medication from home OR if the needed medication is in the possession at the home Gretna Kids Connection site, awareness would need to be given to the Site Director or Assistant Director on duty so that the medication could be retrieved from the home site. If you have any further questions in regards to your child's medical needs, please speak to your Site Director or the Gretna Kids Connection Office.

No-School Days / Snow Days - Daily Schedule (example)

6:30 am - Site Opens
6:30 am - 7:30 am: Cartoon/ Table Activities/ Free Gym
7:30 am - 8:00 am: Breakfast
8:00 am - 9:00 am: Gym Game
9:00 am - 9:30 am: Snack Time
9:30 am - 11:30 am: Planned Rotation
11:30 am - 12:00 pm: Lunch
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Outside (weather permitting) or Gym Time
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Planned Rotation
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm: Snack Time
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm: Outside (weather permitting) or Gym Time
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: Table Activities/Coloring/Free Gym (gym closes at 5:30)
5:30 pm - 6:00 pm: Table Activities/Coloring/Movie on stage
6:00 pm: Site Closes

Planned Activities

Each site has planned activities for the children. The activities can include, but are not limited to: group games, table activities, coloring, arts & crafts, science experiments, STEM activities, brain games, activity packets, reading activities, cooking activities, small group activities, movies/cartoons, and dramatic play.

Supervision and Safety at the Sites

Providing Adequate Supervision

Staff members are the most critical element in the successful operation of our childcare program. They are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment, providing adequate and appropriate supervision at all times when children are in attendance. While every situation differs, staff are expected to exercise good judgment in assessing proper supervision. Our guidelines for appropriate supervision include ensuring two staff members remain in the same room as the children, never leaving children unattended, striving to eliminate distractions, implementing an accountability plan for children using restrooms or drinking fountains during outdoor play, and maintaining staff visibility and availability at all times.

Attendance and Absence Procedures

A primary goal of the Gretna Kids Connection program is to provide a safe environment for every child, and knowing which children are scheduled to be present is crucial. Attendance is taken promptly after school dismissal once children arrive in the gym. If your child is scheduled to attend Gretna Kids Connection after school but does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified the program, the Site Director will be informed and will initiate the 'Missing Child Procedure'. If your child will not be attending the P.M. session, please notify the Site Director by 2:00 P.M. There is no need to call if your child will not be attending the A.M. session.

Missing Child Procedure and Policy

If a child is scheduled to attend Gretna Kids Connection after school and does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified the program, the following steps will be taken: First, staff will check with the school Secretary to confirm if the child left school or went home ill, then check with the classroom teacher. Next, the parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be called. If contact cannot be made, the Gretna Public Schools Administration Building will be called for assistance. Persistent lack of communication regarding a child's attendance may result in a request for a meeting.

Health and Safety

Illness Policy

Gretna Kids Connection maintains a strict illness exclusion policy to protect the health of all children and staff. Children cannot be accepted if they have a contagious illness. Specific exclusion criteria include: a temperature of 100°F orally or 99°F axillary/temporally or higher (and must be fever-free for 24 hours); a temperature meeting the above criteria combined with symptoms such as a severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge; cough, sore throat, swollen glands, or skin rash; headache, dizziness, or seizure; red, watery, or draining eye(s) that has not ceased (a physician's note will be required confirming non-communicable status); drainage from the ear(s) that has not ceased; skin lesions like impetigo, ringworm, scabies, or unhealed skin sores (again, a physician's note will be required); upset stomach and vomiting within 24 hours (must be symptom-free for 24 hours); diarrhea (two or more loose, watery stools per day, must be diarrhea-free for 24 hours); and head lice (must be nit-free).

If any of these conditions occur while a child is at Gretna Kids Connection, parents will be contacted to pick up their child within one hour. If parents cannot be reached, authorized individuals on file will be contacted. Please inform the Site Director if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. A notice will be posted or emailed to all families at the site (without disclosing the child's name) to inform them of exposure. Common colds and allergies, unless causing significant discomfort, typically do not prohibit attendance. Our policy emphasizes maintaining cleanliness and good health practices for everyone.

Chronic and Special Health Needs

Parents are expected to declare any chronic or special health needs their child may have on the registration form, requiring special attention. The Program Director or the Director of Registration will then reach out to the parents to discuss whether procedures or accommodations can effectively meet the child's needs.

Medication Administration and Storage

Medication can be stored and administered at Gretna Kids Connection in strict adherence to guidelines set forth by the Nebraska Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure Division. All medication, in its original container, must be delivered directly to Site Directors and accompanied by proper documentation, including the Gretna Kids Connection Medication Authorization form and a doctor's note/action plan in order for medication to be administered. Expired medication will not be kept on site, as this violates our licensing agreement and will be returned to parents. Parents are responsible for supplying non-expired medication with all required documentation. Gretna Kids Connection should always have current, non-expired medication on site if you list this on your registration. Failure to provide non-expired or listed medication for your child(ren) will result in pausing care and or termination of care. It is important to note that Gretna Kids Connection is a separate entity from Gretna Public Schools and has different state regulations regarding medication use; therefore, we cannot share medications with Gretna Public Schools.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Licensure of School-Age-Only Child Care Centers sets forth specific regulations for medication administration. These include the "5

Rights" (right drug, recipient, dose, route, and time) for delivery. Parental responsibility involves parents or licensed healthcare professionals determining if staff are competent to administer medication, while Center Directors assess staff ability. Confidentiality is paramount; staff must not disclose information about a child's medication, physical, or mental health unless necessary for safety, though a medication log sheet does not violate confidentiality if parents are informed of private communication options. Written permission and instructions from a doctor are required for all prescription and non-prescription medications, which must be in their original containers, clearly labeled for the child, stored as instructed, and returned when no longer needed, with dosages not exceeding the label instructions. Errors must be reported. Expired medication shall not be given or applied to a child and shall be returned to the parent. For unusual circumstances, such as PRN medication or non-oral routes, a written statement from the prescribing healthcare professional is required. All individuals must properly wash their hands before and after handling medication, especially if bodily fluids are involved.

All medications must be kept in proper storage: prescription and non-prescription medications must be in locked storage when children are in care, with separate locked storage for refrigerated medications. All medications must be in their original container, stored according to instructions, clearly labeled for the named child, and returned when no longer needed. Over-the-counter, non-toxic topical ointments like lip balm, petroleum jelly, and diaper ointment must be kept out of children's reach. Gretna Kids Connection uses a medication log system, with each site having a designated confidential binder for enrolled children receiving medication. A completed medication log sheet, signed by a parent/guardian and including a competency statement, is required. Medication log forms must be updated each summer, at the beginning of each school year, and whenever medication type, dose, route, or administration time is modified.

First Aid and Emergency Response

A first aid kit, inaccessible to children but available on the premises, is mandatory. It must contain a fever thermometer and covers, soap, bandages, sterile gauze pads, first aid tape, scissors, and disposable gloves (non-latex).

For children with allergies requiring an EpiPen, Gretna Kids Connection requires parents to provide their child's own EpiPen to be kept on site. If an EpiPen is needed, a staff member will inject it, 911 will be called immediately, and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

In the event of a Minor Accident, first aid will be administered, and parents or guardians may be notified, depending on the severity. An Accident Report may also be completed. For Serious Accidents, emergency first aid will be administered, and parents or guardians will be notified immediately. If the Site Director cannot reach the parent or guardian, emergency phone numbers on file will be used. An emergency unit will be called in only in extreme cases, typically dispatched by city or county officials to the nearest hospital. An adult staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain until the parent or guardian arrives. At enrollment, parents grant permission for the program to transport and treat the child in the event of a medical emergency, and a copy of the child's emergency contact information will be provided to the hospital.

Our general guidelines for administering first aid include: the staff will not move the child until the injury's extent is determined. For mild cuts or abrasions, warm water and a Band-Aid will be applied; salves, ointments, or creams will not be applied or kept on site unless prescribed by a

licensed healthcare professional and supplied by parents. For deeper cuts that may require sutures, parents are called immediately; if unreachable, an authorized person or the child's physician will be contacted. If a limb is visibly distorted, parents are contacted immediately to decide whether to dispatch 911; if parents are unreachable, staff will call 911. If a child becomes unconscious, 911 is called immediately. For head injuries of any kind, a cold compress is applied, and parents are notified.

Emergency Procedures

Training and Reporting

All staff members at Gretna Kids Connection are certified in both CPR and First Aid. Additionally, in accordance with the law, all Gretna Kids Connection staff are mandated reporters, required to notify Child Protective Services and law enforcement officials if they suspect a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

Drills and Safety Protocols

Fire drills are conducted monthly, and tornado drills are performed four times between March and September. These drills take place during Gretna Kids Connection hours to ensure all children are familiar with evacuation procedures. A written record of all fire and tornado drills, along with a map showing proper evacuation routes, is posted at each Gretna Kids Connection site.

In critical situations, we follow specific safety protocols:

- **Hold:** If there's an immediate threat in the halls, students are directed to clear the hallways and remain in their room or area until an "All Clear" is announced, continuing business as usual. Staff must close and lock doors, account for everyone, and continue normal activities.
- **Secure:** If a threat is outside the building, everyone gets inside, and outside doors are locked. Students return inside and continue activities. Staff bring everyone indoors, lock outside doors, increase situational awareness, and account for all students and adults.
- **Lockdown:** For an immediate threat inside the building, the instruction is "Locks, lights, out of sight." Students move away from the sight and remain silent, not opening the door. Staff recover students from hallways if possible, lock classroom doors, turn out the lights, move out of sight, remain silent, and prepare to evade or defend.
- **Evacuate:** If an evacuation is necessary (to a specified location), students are instructed to leave their belongings and follow instructions. Staff lead the safety strategy, account for students and adults, bring an Emergency bag and Information, and notify if anyone is missing, extra, or injured.
- **Shelter:** This strategy addresses specific hazards: for a tornado, shelter is sought in a designated area (see Tornado Map); for hazardous materials (Hazmat), rooms are sealed; for an earthquake, individuals drop, cover, and hold; for a tsunami, moving to high ground is advised.

Evacuation and Reunification Guidelines

In the event of an evacuation, the following evacuation sites will be used:

1. **Gretna Elementary School**
 - Evacuation site: Gretna Middle School, 11705 S 216th St., Gretna, NE 68028
2. **Thomas Elementary School**
 - Evacuation Site: Gretna High School, 11335 S 204th St., Gretna, NE 68028

- Alternative Site: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 11204 204th St., Gretna, NE 68028
- 3. **Harvest Hills Elementary School**
 - Evacuation route: Walk towards Thomas Elementary
 - Coordination: Program Director contacts GPS for transportaion
- 4. **Palisades Elementary School**
 - Evacuation site: Gretna Volunteer Fire Department-District 2, 10309 S 168th St, Omaha, NE 68136
- 5. **Aspen Creek Elementary**
 - Evacuation site: Aspen Creek Middle School, 18414 Summit Dr, Omaha, NE 68136
- 6. **Whitetail Elementary**
 - Evacuation site: St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, 7790 192nd St, Gretna, NE 68028
- 7. **Cedar Hollow Elementary**
 - Evacuation sites: Celebration Covenant Church, 16868 Giles Rd, Omaha, NE 68136
 - Alternative site: Palisades Elementary, 16820 Chutney Dr, Omaha, NE 68136

Summer Gretna Kids Connection

Summer Program

The Summer Program requires a separate registration from the school year. Gretna Kids Connection operates from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. at selected sites as part of the Summer Program. Summer rates will apply and are billed weekly. Children can only attend the Summer Program site assigned to their home school, as we combine sites as needed during the summer months. Children must have completed their first year of Kindergarten before being eligible to attend the Summer Gretna Kids Connection Program. Summer enrollment is a commitment, and families are charged accordingly, unless a specified parenting plan includes parental visitations as outlined in your divorce decree.

Sunscreen

A sunscreen sign-off will be needed on your summer registration. This will allow Gretna Kids Connection staff to assist your child in applying sunscreen. Parents will need to supply sunscreen with your child's name on it. Sunscreen can not be shared with siblings, each child needs their own sunscreen, or Gretna Kids Connection has the option to charge you for the use of our sunscreen for the summer. Rates may vary, year to year.

It is not our standard procedure to use sunscreen during the school year. If a parent requests that sunscreen be administered to their child(ren) during Gretna Kids Connection hours, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to communicate that with your Site Director and provide the sunscreen labeled with their child's name on it.

Summer - Daily Schedule (example)

6:30 am: Site Opens
6:30 am - 7:30 am: Cartoon / Table Activities / Free Gym
7:30 am - 8:00 am: Breakfast
8:00 am - 9:00 am: Outside Time
9:00 am - 9:30 am: Snack Time
9:30 am - 11:30 am: Planned Rotation or Field trip
11:30 am - 12:00 pm: Lunch
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm: Outside Time
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm: Quiet Time
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm: Daily Rotation
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Planned Rotations
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm: Snack Time
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm: Outside (weather permitting) or Gym Time
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: Table Activities / Coloring / Free Gym (gym closes at 5:30)
5:30 pm - 6:00 pm: Table Activities / Coloring / Movie on Stage
6:00 pm: Site Closes

Daily Rotations

Each site plans a daily rotation for each grade level. The daily rotation may include, but is not limited to: Activity packets, Reading/Writing Activity, Gym or Outside time, table activities, and Wii and electronics time (only on assigned day if this is an option).

Planned Rotations

Each site plans rotations for the children, usually by grade level. The rotations can include, but are not limited to: group games, table activities, coloring, arts & crafts, science experiments, STEM activities, brain games, activity sheets, reading activities, cooking activities, small group activities, movies/cartoons, and dramatic play.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned each week during the Summer Program. A calendar for the field trips and on-site activities will be provided to families. All costs of field trips and on-site activities are included in the tuition rate. For added safety, the staff-to-child ratio is lowered for field trips. The following is a list of field trip safety procedures for staff and children in the program.

Field Trip Procedures

Field trips are a regular feature of the Summer Program, planned weekly, with a calendar provided to families. All costs associated with field trips and on-site activities are included in the tuition rate. For enhanced safety, the staff-to-child ratio is lowered during field trips.

For Staff: Prior to any scheduled field trip, staff members are thoroughly informed of essential details, including meeting locations, times, and cell phone numbers. For easy identification, all staff will wear a designated Gretna Kids Connection T-shirt. Each staff member is responsible for maintaining a list of children's names in their designated group, and every adult staff member will carry a first-aid kit. Staff will also accompany children to and from restrooms as needed. Throughout the field trip, staff will count their assigned group before moving to any new designated area. Fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled departure time, all staff will meet at a designated location where the Site Director will conduct an initial attendance check and an additional headcount before the group departs. Upon returning to the site, one staff member is assigned to complete a final check of the bus to ensure all children and belongings have safely exited.

For Children: To ensure a safe and organized experience, children will be grouped or assigned to a buddy system. Before departing the site, staff will review crucial information with the children, including bus rules and safety protocols, general field trip rules and safety procedures, the process for using restrooms (a staff member must take them), and what steps to take if they become lost or separated from their group. All children must wear their Gretna Kids Connection summer shirts on field trips days. While on field trips, children are prohibited from bringing cash to purchase items on a field trip. If at any time a child is disrespectful or refuses to abide by the rules, the parent/guardian will be contacted to remove the child from Gretna Kids Connection for the remainder of the day.

Transportation for Field Trips

The Gretna Kids Connection program utilizes the Gretna School District buses and drivers for all field trip transportation.

Bus Rules: While on the bus, children are expected to follow specific rules: they must remain seated and face forward at all times, keep their hands inside the bus when the windows are down, keep their feet out of the aisle, and keep their voices to a minimum.

In conjunction with Nebraska Licensing, the following standards will be met:

1. Children are not left alone in any vehicle or bus
2. Smoking does not occur in the vehicle
3. Door(s) are locked when the vehicle is in motion
4. Driver is age 18 or older
5. Documentation of a current and valid driver's license issued by DMV available
6. Documentation of a current and valid driver's license for the type of vehicle available
7. Vehicles are properly registered
8. Vehicles are insured
9. Vehicles have a first aid kit
10. Vehicles have the parent contact information for each child transported
11. The number of children transported does not exceed the manufacturer's seating capacity
12. Children are properly restrained in the vehicle
13. Written parental permission to transport is available for review

Lunch Program

Gretna Kids Connection does provide a lunch program during the Summer. The lunch program offers choices from all five food groups. The cost of the lunch program is included in the weekly tuition rate. Lunch is provided for the children on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. On Fridays, children will need to bring a sack lunch from home. A menu for each month is provided for the families so they know what is planned for lunch. If your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please speak with your Site Director. If we are gone on a field trip during lunch, a sack lunch will be provided by the Program. Children always have the option of bringing a lunch from home.

Behavior Management

Discipline Guidelines

Abusive language, profanity, inappropriate gestures, back-talking, disrespect, refusal to follow rules, and behaviors that cause harm to another child or staff member—such as fighting, biting, hitting, kicking, self-harm, physical aggression, or repetitive negative behaviors—will not be tolerated within the Gretna Kids Connection program.

Should any of these behaviors occur, the following discipline guidelines will be implemented: The child will be immediately separated from the situation and given a "thinking or calming down period," which typically lasts 3-5 minutes, but may be extended if necessary for the child to regain self-control and rejoin the group or activity. It is strictly prohibited to isolate a child in any area where they cannot be seen and supervised by an adult staff member. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the Site Director may complete an "A Note Home" or a "Child Disciplinary Report (CDR)." An "A Note Home" is used for behaviors such as not listening, talking back, disrespect, or using abusive language. A "Child Disciplinary Report" (CDR) is reserved for instances where a child physically harms another child or staff, engages in self-harm, or exhibits repetitive negative signs and expressive behaviors. In some situations, it may be necessary to contact parents or guardians to pick up their child if the child is unable to control their behavior and must be picked up within 1 hour of being called. If a family has multiple children in the program and one is removed for behavioral reasons, parents have the choice to either keep the other child(ren) in the program or remove them. Any change requires a "Change of Status Form," and a two-week notice must be given to the Site Director or Gretna Kids Connection office, during which tuition charges still apply.

The above discipline guideline and policy has been established to provide consistency throughout the Gretna Kids Connection program. Appropriate procedures are in place to help aid behavior management, and are not limited to the following; children within the program will have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations of the program, a variety of daily activities and routines are established that allow children to make choices, praising acceptable and appropriate behaviors, actively listening to the children and their feelings, redirecting negative behaviors and suggest appropriate behavior, and allow children to resolve conflicts with staff supervision.

Inappropriate Forms Of Discipline

Inappropriate forms of discipline will not be used by staff in the Gretna Kids Connection program such as: restraints (unless necessary to protect the child or others), profane or abusive language, isolation without supervision, placing a child in a dark area, inflicting physical pain, forced physical activity (running laps, doing push-ups, etc.) and verbal abuse or loud voice tones directed in a derogatory manner.

Discipline Policy

Our discipline policy emphasizes a positive approach, encouraging good behavior and redirecting inappropriate activity. If a negative behavior persists, the child will be removed from the situation for a "thinking or calming down period." After this period, the Site Director or Assistant Director will discuss the situation with the child to determine if an "A Note Home" or "Child Disciplinary Report" (CDR) is warranted. If either is issued, parents will be notified and provided with a copy. While a parent's signature is not required, it does not void the documentation.

A child will receive a "Child Disciplinary Report" (CDR) after accumulating three "A Note Home" disciplinary actions for non-physical behavior during a school year or summer program. Upon receiving their first "Child Disciplinary Report" (CDR) (whether due to three "A Note Home" actions or a direct physical behavior incident), parents will receive an email from the Program Director to discuss the child's behavior, with an option for a sit-down meeting. Please allow 24-48 business hours for this email. If a child receives three "Child Disciplinary Reports" (CDR) they will be removed from the program immediately.

Depending on the severity of the behavior, the Program Director and the Gretna Public Schools Foundation may terminate care at their discretion, without following the above guidelines. If a child is removed from the program on or between tuition billings, you are still responsible for payment. Tuition will only be disabled going forward.

Standards Of Behavior

To ensure standards of behavior are met, the following guidelines should be reviewed by all families utilizing Gretna Kids Connection program: The rights, property and dignity of each person in and around the school are to be safeguarded at all times (no abusive language, signs, continued back talk and theft of any kind will be tolerated), authority in the program is established for the health, safety and well being of all children and staff, and no child will be allowed to undermine the authority, school facilities are the property of all residents in the Gretna Public School District and we must treat all school property with respect (no vandalism, defacing property, etc.).

Partnership with Families

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an incredibly important component of our program. A strong partnership, with parents and children working collaboratively with our staff, is a crucial element of a high-quality childcare experience. Building a solid relationship, founded on mutual trust and respect, with the Gretna Kids Connection employees at your child's school, is key to ensuring your childcare arrangement functions effectively for everyone involved. As you embark on or continue this relationship, we encourage you to keep the following tips in mind.

First and foremost, maintaining open lines of communication at all times is vital. Please inform your Site Director of any significant events or issues in your child's life that might be influencing their behavior. Additionally, we ask that you familiarize yourself with and honor the program's policies, including respecting designated drop-off and pick-up times, and calling us promptly if you anticipate being late for any reason.

We recognize that certain topics or situations may be challenging to discuss. Our aim is to foster an honest and open approach to communication with all our families, as addressing issues proactively will facilitate easier discussions. When concerns about your child first develop, we prefer to speak privately, either in person or over the phone. If you have specific concerns or observations, please be prepared to provide concrete examples to help us fully understand the situation. It is important to note that sensitive situations will not be discussed if a parent is unable to control their emotions at that moment; however, we will always be willing to reschedule and meet at another, more conducive time. Conflicts are a normal part of most relationships and can often be resolved when both parties are willing to understand each other's perspectives and seek a compromise. Finally, please do not hesitate to ask questions if you are ever unsure about our policies and procedures.

**Parents must also sign the Behavioral Policy Acknowledgment & Agreement dated January 2026*

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