



School-Linked Before & After School Care

Parent Handbook

Strathmore, Alberta

Program Year 2026–2027

This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations for families participating in the School-Linked Before-and-After-School Care Program

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Hours and Days of Operation

School-Linked Before and After School Care operates during the following hours:

Morning Care: **7:00 AM – 8:21 AM**

Afternoon Care: **3:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Days of Operation: Monday – Friday (except PD/Flex Fridays — see PD/Flex Friday section)

We are also open during Teachers' Convention Week (February 16–19).

Please note:

Staff will not answer the door before **7:00 AM**.

If you anticipate picking up your child after **6:00 PM**, please review the Late Pickup Policy.

Daily Schedule

Morning Schedule:

- Free Play
- Bathroom Break
- Line Up for School / Dismissal

After School Schedule:

- Sign-in
 - Free Play
 - Tidy Up
 - Quiet Reading
 - Fitness / Gross Motor
 - Centers
 - Home Time
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History of School-Linked

School-Linked first opened in 2019. Miss Becca, the Owner and Director, has a strong passion for Early Childhood Education and wanted to create meaningful change in the community. Her vision was to set a new standard for childcare — one that was truly linked between the school, the program, and families.

School-Linked was created with the goal of prioritizing quality over quantity, providing a safe and convenient place where families can confidently leave their children.

From the beginning, the program aimed to create a culture built on:

- Positivity
- Respect
- Kindness
- Nurturing relationships

Miss Becca wanted a program where she would feel 100% confident leaving her own children and recommending it to others.

Over the past seven years, the program has grown significantly and has become a thriving part of the community. Our mission remains the same today:

To provide quality childcare while fostering a culture of kindness, positivity, and nurturing for every child and family we serve.

Our Educators

Children at School-Linked will interact with several educators throughout the day.

In Alberta, the licensed ratio for before- and after-school care is 1 educator for every 15 children (1:15). However, at School-Linked, we strive to maintain a ratio closer to 1:10 whenever possible to provide additional support.

All staff members have:

- A minimum of five years of experience
- Post-secondary education in related fields
- A Criminal Record Check
- Valid First Aid certification

We pride ourselves on maintaining a team of high-quality educators who support our mission and provide excellent care to all families.

Philosophy

At School-Linked, we strongly believe in learning through play. Play-based learning allows children to explore, discover, and develop important life skills through engaging activities and centers.

Benefits of play-based learning include:

- Problem solving
- Empathy
- Creativity
- Teamwork
- Self-expression
- Communication
- Self-confidence
- Social interaction
- Language development

We also believe in maintaining consistent routines, which help children feel secure and understand what to expect each day. Children are provided with opportunities to express themselves and explore activities of their choosing.

Curriculum

Each week, educators plan activities based on children's interests and observations.

Our programming focuses on several developmental domains:

- Gross Motor
- Loose Parts
- STEM
- Sensory
- Dramatic Play

Each domain includes a variety of activities that children explore through play. Activities may change throughout the week, but remain connected to the weekly topic. Children participate in free play exploration during morning and afternoon sessions.

Each afternoon includes:

- 45 minutes of Gross Motor activity, either outdoors or in the gym.

We also include daily Quiet Reading Time, where children may:

- Read independently
- Complete homework
- Practice letter recognition and sounds with staff support if they are not yet reading.

Celebrations

When it is a child's birthday:

- Staff create a special birthday card
- The child receives a small treat to take home

Parents who wish to provide treats for the program are welcome to do so, but all treats must be NUT-FREE.

Kindness Jar

We encourage positive behavior through our Kindness Jar. When educators observe children showing kindness or positive behavior, they place a star in the jar. When the jar is full, a popsicle stick is drawn to select a reward, such as:

- Cookie Party
 - Sundae Party
 - Pizza Party
 - Movie Party
 - Extra Park Time
-

Parent Events

School-Linked hosts two parent events each year.

These events allow families to:

- Visit the program
- Participate in activities
- Connect with staff

Families who attend will be entered into a draw to win a \$100 grocery gift card.

Event dates will be announced in September 2026.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SUPERVISION

Parking and Bus Safety

PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE BUS RUN during school transportation times.

Restricted times:

7:30 AM – 8:21 AM
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

These areas must remain clear to allow buses to safely pick up and drop off students.

Policy enforcement:

- 1st occurrence – Reminder given
- 2nd occurrence – Parent meeting required
- 3rd occurrence – Family will be asked to leave the program

The safety of all children and transportation staff is our priority.

Animals

Animals are not permitted inside the school or program. If you arrive with a pet, you will be asked to remain outside, and staff will send your child out to you. This policy follows Alberta Health regulations and insurance requirements.

Medication Policy

Licensing regulations require these procedures. If a child requires medication (including Epi-pens or puffers):

- A Medication Authorization Form must be completed
- Medication must be in the original labelled container

Important: Medication found in a child's belongings cannot be administered.

Emergency medications must remain at the program at all times and cannot be shared between siblings via backpacks.

Illness and Sickness Policy

If a child develops the following symptoms, parents will be contacted, and pickup will be required:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Consistent diarrhea (2 times in one hour)
- Severe cough
- Pink eye
- Lice
- Communicable disease
- Too lethargic to participate

Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning or provide a doctor's note.

If parents do not arrange pickup:

- An ambulance may be called.
- Parents are responsible for any associated fees.

Failure to pick up a sick child:

1st occurrence – verbal and written warning

2nd occurrence – family will be asked to leave the program

Parents must notify School-Linked immediately if their child has:

- Lice
 - Pink eye
 - Communicable disease
-

Emergencies and Incidents

School-Linked follows an Above-the-Neck Policy. If a child experiences an injury above the neck, parents will be contacted immediately.

For other incidents:

- Parents will be notified either immediately or at pickup, depending on the severity. An Incident/Injury Form must be signed.

For serious incidents:

- Photos may be taken for documentation. Alberta Childcare Licensing may contact parents

Parents are responsible for ambulance fees if emergency services are required.

Outdoor Gross Motor Policy

Outdoor play is extremely important for children's development.

However, Alberta Health guidelines require children to remain indoors when:

- The temperature reaches -20°C with wind chill
- Temperature exceeds +25°C
- Air Quality Index is 6 or higher
- UV Index is 8 or higher.
- Lightning is present

If outdoor play is not possible, children will participate in indoor gross motor activities in the gym or classroom.

Appropriate Outdoor Clothing

Parents must provide appropriate clothing for the weather.

If children do not have proper clothing, and staff ratios do not allow children to stay inside, they will still participate in outdoor time.

School-Linked is not liable for injuries or health concerns resulting from inadequate clothing.

Staff encourage children to wear proper clothing and stay hydrated, but cannot force compliance.

Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol, and Drug Use

The use of alcohol, drugs, smoking, or vaping is strictly prohibited on school property, including pickup areas.

These policies follow Alberta Health Services and Childcare Licensing regulations.

ATTENDANCE AND PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Late Pickup / Absence / Vacation Policy

Pickup time ends at **6:00 PM**.

If late pickup occurs:

- Parents must contact the program.
- If parents are late without communication:
- \$1 per minute late fee.

If late pickup occurs more than 3 times, care may be terminated.

Absences

- Parents must notify the program if their child will be absent.

If no communication occurs:

- Staff will follow the Missing Child Protocol
- All contacts will be called
- Police may be contacted

Policy enforcement:

1st occurrence – warning

2nd occurrence – \$50 fee

3rd occurrence – removal from program

No refunds are issued for absences or illness.

Program Closures

School-Linked is closed for:

- All Statutory Holidays
- Christmas Break: December 19 – January 3
- Easter Break: March 26 – April 4
- National Truth and Reconciliation Day: September 30

Professional Development Days:

- November 20
- May 21

Weather Policy

SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY.

Weather conditions may affect program operations.

Factors considered when determining closures include:

- Road conditions
- Snow or ice accumulation
- Ongoing precipitation
- Temperature and wind chill
- Weather forecasts
- Building safety
- Guidelines from Alberta Health and Alberta Childcare Licensing

Decisions will be made:

- By 5:00 PM the evening before, or
- By 5:00 AM the morning of

Notifications will be sent via:

- Email
 - Social media
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Closing the Program

The program may close if:

- Golden Hills School Division closes schools
 - All buses are cancelled
 - Extreme weather warnings are issued
 - Roads are unsafe
 - The building loses power, water, or heat
 - Floods or natural disasters occur
 - Staff-to-child ratios cannot be met
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PD / Flex Fridays

School-Linked offers 8.5 hours of care on PD/Flex Fridays.

Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Families must sign up 10 days in advance.

Lunch and snacks must be provided.

Fees:

- Regular families: **Free**
- Drop-in families: **\$30/day**

If registered but cancelled without 24 hours' notice, the \$30 fee still applies.

Payment Policies

Payment is due on the **1st** of each month.

Accepted methods:

- E-transfer
- Cheque
- Cash

Cheques should be made payable to School-Linked Strathmore.

Invoices are sent on the **18th** of each month.

Late payment process:

- Reminder on the 2nd
 - Attendance suspended after the 5th
 - Removal from the program after the 10th
 - Late payment fee: **\$50**
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Program Fees

Full-time Care (Before & After School): **\$525/month**

Part-time AM (Before School): **\$300/month**

Part-time PM (After School): **\$425/month**

Drop-In Care: \$35/day

PD/Flex Friday Drop-In: **\$30/day**

Teacher's Convention Week:

- **Free for full-time families**
- **\$30/day for others**

Registration Fee: **\$50 per family per year**

Refund Policy

No refunds are provided for:

- Absences
 - Illness
 - Planned closures
 - Refunds only occur if the program closes for more than 5 business days.
 - Maximum refund: \$100/month.
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Child Behaviour Plan

A Child Behaviour Plan may be created when additional support is required.

This plan includes:

- Support strategies
- Behavior management approaches
- Scheduled review meetings (3 per year)

The plan must be signed by parents and the Program Director.

1:1 Support

If a child requires 1:1 support and funding from FSCD or other agencies is unavailable, parents are responsible for covering the cost of an aide.

School-Linked will handle the hiring of the aide.

If the aide is unavailable, the program may be unable to provide care.

Volunteer Opportunities

Parents are welcome to volunteer in the program.

Requirements:

- Criminal Record Check
- Vulnerable Sector Search

These can be obtained at the Strathmore Police Station.

Communication with Families

School-Linked has an open-door policy. Parents may contact staff via:

- In person
- Phone
- Text
- Email

Please note that staff remain within ratio during program hours, so phone calls are preferred for urgent matters. Parents receive weekly emails that include:

- Weekly planning, Updates, and announcements
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Child Guidance Policy

School-Linked strictly prohibits:

- Physical punishment
- Verbal degradation
- Emotional deprivation
- Denial of necessities
- Physical restraint or confinement

Children are taught to:

- Respect others
- Respect themselves
- Respect materials and school property

Program expectations include:

- Walking Feet
- Gentle Hands/Feet
- Inside Voices
- Listening Ears

If behavior concerns arise:

- Staff speak with the child
- The child helps develop a solution
- A quiet space or a short break may be used
- Incident forms may be completed

If behavior continues, a parent meeting will be scheduled.

Authorized Pickup and Emergency Contacts

Only individuals listed on the Registration Form may pick up a child. If someone new will be picking up:

- Parents must notify staff
- Photo ID may be required

Children cannot arrive or leave independently.

An adult 18 years or older must drop off and pick up each child.

Technology Policy

Children are not permitted to use personal electronic devices during program hours.

This includes:

- Phones
- Tablets
- Gaming devices
- Smartwatches used for entertainment

Devices must remain turned off in backpacks.

Program technology may occasionally be used for educational activities such as:

- Body Break videos
 - Read-aloud stories
 - Educational programming
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Children's Belongings

Children may bring personal items, but:

- School-Linked is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.
- If items become disruptive, staff may request that they remain at home.

Recommended items:

- Water bottle
- Extra clothes
- Outdoor gear
- Sunscreen

All items should be labelled. Weapons or gory items are not permitted.

Parent Acknowledgement

I, _____

Confirm that I have read and understand the School-Linked Parent Handbook and agree to follow all policies and procedures outlined.

Date: _____