

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEAF SCHOOL



To inspire every deaf student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care

**Family Handbook
2011-2012
School Year**

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Message from the Director

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This Parent handbook was prepared to provide you information about the policies at Rocky Mountain Deaf School. In the back of the handbook, you will find a copy of the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, signed into Colorado law on March 18, 1996.

Other information can be located on the school's website at www.rmdeafschool.net. Please visit it often as we include news and announcements about upcoming activities. Also, you will receive a monthly newsletter with more detailed information about events and activities.

The Handbook, the website, and monthly newsletters are not meant to replace the wonderful face-to-face discussions that we have regarding your children. We value your input, and consider you an important member of your child's educational team. Please always feel welcome to come talk with us in person, and to ask any questions you may have regarding your child's progress. We welcome you to a collaborative and rewarding school year.

Best Wishes,

Rocky Mountain Deaf School Staff

Purpose

To inspire every deaf student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care.

Rocky Mountain Deaf School is founded on the belief that deaf children can and should succeed. The driving force behind the school is a theme of excellence in research-based academic programs. In this intellectually stimulating environment, communication is totally accessible throughout the day from every person in the child's environment. Each student's potential is maximized as teachers continue to instill in each child the joy of living and learning.

Vision

As a high-performing, innovative educational program for students who are deaf, we are deeply committed to providing a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. We prepare each deaf student to be literate, academically successful, and technologically competent. We provide a linguistically rich learning environment through the acquisition of American Sign Language and English both inside and outside the classroom.

Through strong collaboration with students, parents, the deaf community, the educational research community, the school community, the business community, and other interested stakeholders, we are a model of best practices and an exemplary resource in the field of Deaf Education both nationally and internationally.

Credo

We recognize that:

- ❖ “deaf” means individuals who have varying hearing acuity (deaf, Deaf, and hard-of-hearing);
- ❖ each deaf child is unique, important, and inviolate;
- ❖ each deaf child is the child of his or her parent(s), not the product nor the property of any culture theory, or establishment;
- ❖ parent(s) are partner(s) in each deaf child’s educational program;
- ❖ each deaf child’s home and culture (language, values and lifestyle) must be respected;
- ❖ being deaf is a positive state of being;
- ❖ deaf children need school personnel who are competent in and knowledgeable about the current trends of education, deafness, and research;
- ❖ deaf children deserve, and are capable of, an American education and English literacy on par with non-deaf children;
- ❖ deaf children should be educated in the company of other deaf children;
- ❖ deaf children need an education that uses and develops accessible language and communication methods and respects the child’s visual skills and strengths;
- ❖ deaf children deserve a rigorous curriculum and fair assessments;
- ❖ deaf children can succeed with innovative instructional methods, materials, and leading-edge technology; and
- ❖ the world is the classroom.

RMDS INFORMATION

STAFF

Nancy Bridenbaugh	<i>Director</i>
Amy Novotny	<i>Assessment, Research, Curriculum Coordinator</i>
Alison Talbert	<i>Business Manager</i>
Gwen Walton	<i>Secretary</i>
Melissa Peterson	<i>Special Needs Resource Teacher</i>
Rachella Ortiz	<i>High School Life Skills Teacher</i>
Jennifer McLellan,	<i>Preschool Teacher / Kindergarten Teacher</i>
Kathryn Griebel	<i>Preschool</i>
Stephanie Carson	<i>1st – 2nd grade Homeroom Teacher</i>
Lisa Hann	<i>1st – 2nd grade Homeroom Teacher</i>
Lindsay Crawford	<i>3rd – 5th grade Homeroom Teacher</i>
Patricia Germundson	<i>3rd – 5th grade and Middle School Teacher</i>
Mary Cregan	<i>Middle School Teacher</i>
Nancy McAnlis	<i>Middle/High School Math Teacher</i>
Kelly Baldwin	<i>High School English Teacher</i>
Joyce Brubaker	<i>ASL Specialist</i>
Luci Gale	<i>Physical Education Teacher & Educational Assistant.</i>
Jennifer Roth	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Kenzie Davison	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Shane Lavin	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Marla Jo Rabenstein	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Aisha Hocker	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Nicki Runge	<i>Educational Assistant</i>
Avi Haimowitz	<i>Counselor</i>
Suzanne Sharpe	<i>Speech Therapist</i>
Cheryl Richardson	<i>Occupational & Physical Therapist</i>
Eileen Kratzer	<i>Speech & Language Facilitator</i>

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Voice: 303-984-5749

VP: 303-235-0565

Fax: 303-984-7290

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

SCHOOL HOURS

8:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.

LEARNING CENTER HOURS

12:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

ATTENDANCE:

For safety reasons, we are required by Jeffco to maintain timely and accurate attendance records every morning. We are also required to know where every student is at every moment. The goal at Rocky Mountain Deaf School is to offer students the knowledge and skills required to succeed in the upper grades, and in life. A good attendance record of 95% or better will help students meet their learning goals. Rocky Mountain Deaf School students are expected to follow the RMDS calendar.

BENEFITS OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

- *Quarterly Recognition
- *Improved grades
- *Reduced makeup homework
- *Easier time learning new material in class

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURES

Parents, students and the RMDS staff are responsible for supporting good attendance as established by the Jeffco School District policies. The procedures outlined below must be followed when an RMDS student is absent.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

If your child will be absent for any reason please:

- Email our secretary at gwen@rmdeafschool.net Or...Call 303-984-5741 to leave a message on our school message line
- Write an excuse regarding the absence to give to the school when your child returns.

To obtain an excused absence, the absence must be in one of the following categories:

- Illness (after the 4th absence due to illness within a semester, a doctor's note is required)
- Medical, dental or court appointments
- Religious observances
- Death in the family

TARDY POLICY

1. Teachers will take attendance at 8:35 and input into Campus.
2. Students who are tardy must check in at the front desk.
3. The secretary will change the Campus record to TARDY and give the student a TARDY slip.
4. Students will give the TARDY slip to their teacher.
5. If a child arrives in class without a tardy slip, the teacher will send them back to the secretary to complete the above process.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES & TARDIES:

An unexcused absence or tardy is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the above criteria. Unexcused tardies and absences will result in:

- Lower grades
- Less success in meeting learning goals
- A personal letter to the parents from the director
- A Habitual Truant is declared when a student has 4 unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in one school year. In this case, we are required to notify the truancy department in Jefferson County.
- A Child Study meeting with the parents and appropriate school personnel to develop a remedial attendance plan.

MAKE UP WORK:

A student with an excused absence from school will be given the opportunity to complete missed schoolwork to receive credit. The student must make arrangements with each teacher for make-up work within three (3) days of the absence. The student is responsible to complete all make-up work as scheduled with teachers. Extenuating circumstances must be approved by the program director in consultation with the teacher and the student.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a parent has a problem which has not been resolved to their satisfaction with staff members, they may initiate an official grievance procedure. The grievance procedure form is available from the Business Manager or the Director.

DRESS

Good grooming is always important. Cleanliness, appropriateness, and neatness of appearance are the keys to good grooming. Clothing that is revealing is not appropriate. Examples of unacceptable clothing include tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriff types of tops that expose the midsection, T-shirts with improper language or advertising, as well as any type of gang clothing.

DROP-OFF/PICKUP POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Supervision of students is available prior to the school day from 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. Please do not drop children off prior to 8:00 a.m.

Students enrolled in ***After School Programs*** can go directly from class to the program. Children not enrolled in our programs must be picked up directly after school. Children who are not picked up on time after the end of the school day will remain with a staff member. If the parent does not come to pick the child up within 1 hour of the close of the school day, the child will be taken to the Golden Police Department at 911 10th St., in Golden.

VISITING OUR SCHOOL:

Parents are encouraged to visit classes at any time that is convenient for them. Classroom visitation not only gives you an opportunity for you to observe your child's work and personal relationships in a group setting with other children of the same approximate age. Short visits are usually of more value than one prolonged visit. You should schedule a time with your child's teacher that would be most meaningful to you and your child.

Policy: Parent and Visitor Access to Classrooms

For safety reasons, we are required to know who is in the building at all times and where each person is going. Therefore, it is mandatory that all parents and visitors sign in at the front reception desk.

Also, we value the education of our students and want to minimize disruptions in the classroom. Therefore, we ask that parents respectfully not interrupt teachers while they are preparing for class or teaching students. If you would like to meet with the teacher, please make an appointment to meet with her at a convenient time. Teachers want to be available to parents, but must balance their time with preparing and teaching classes. If you have an immediate concern, please see the director.

Parent and Visitor Access to Classrooms Policy:

When parents or visitors would like to speak with a teacher, they should:

- Set up an appointment with a teacher at a mutually arranged time
- Sign in at the front desk
- Check in with an administrator

When parents or visitors would like to observe a classroom, they should:

- Preschedule your observation, if possible.
- Sign in at the front
- Check in with an administrator

Special Consideration for Preschool & Kindergarten

- Parents are welcome to drop off children in the classroom
- A 10 minute welcome time is scheduled for drop-off time
- We ask that all parents plan to leave the classroom by 8:40, unless an observation is scheduled.

EXCLUSION FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children should have a note from home for temporary exclusion from gym activities for health reasons. Permanent exclusion from gym classes requires a written request from the doctor. Students will also be required to wear appropriate gym shoes during physical education for their own personal safety and the safety of others.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the RMDS instructional approach. In order to ensure the safety of all students on field trips, the school must receive the signed permission slip from parents prior to departure. Any child who does not have a signed permission slip will remain at school. When you join in your child's field trip, you will be expected to function as a chaperone. Your child's teacher will share her/his expectations of your duties on the trip.

As part of our safety measures during field trips, a head-count is taken prior to the start of the trip, and then again, prior to the return to school to ensure that each child is accounted for. If a child is unaccounted for during the field trip, or any other time for that matter, the local authorities (e.g. police) will be notified immediately.

All children under 60 lbs of weight must be transported in a car seat. RMDS does have some car seats to accommodate children. If your child will need a car seat, the RMDS staff will advise you at least 24 hours in advance.

Students who weigh more than 60 lbs must use a seat belt at all times while they are being transported either in a rented van or in the personal car of a staff member. The field trip permission form will indicate which type of vehicle is being used. Staff members are required to furnish proof of insurance, as well as a valid driver's license in order to transport students in their cars.

The RMDS policy regarding payment for field trips is as follows:

1. We accept cash or check
2. Payment is required prior to the field trip.
3. We do NOT accept credit cards.

INSIDE OR OUTSIDE RECESS

This determination is made based upon several things: temperature, wind, and sunshine. If it is raining, snowing, lightning or extremely windy, it is an "INSIDE" day. If it is reasonably comfortable with coat, boots, gloves, and cap, and the temperature is 32 degrees or above, then it is an "OUTSIDE" day.

Are students ever allowed to stay in on "OUTSIDE" days? Yes. Those students who have asthma or other chronic respiratory problems certainly may stay in at the parent's request. All other children are expected to go out for fresh air, movement, play and a change of environment.

If you feel your child should stay in for a specific reason on a specific day, communicate that in writing to the teacher. (As you know, in Colorado it may be 0 degrees at 8 a.m. and balmy by noon.) On "cold weather" days, students should come to school properly dressed for outside recess.

LUNCH/SNACK

The RMDS staff realize that proper nutrition is an important part of learning. If a child is hungry, it is very difficult for them to concentrate on their school work. A specified time has been established during the day when students are permitted to have a snack either in the classroom or in the cafeteria. We strongly encourage parents to provide healthy snacks. Soda and candy are not permitted.

Lunches: No refrigeration is available for bag lunches. Microwave is available to heat or reheat food.

Hot Lunches: Hot Lunches are provided by the Jefferson County School Central Kitchen. Each student lunch cost \$1.85. Each month a calendar of scheduled lunches will be distributed. We ask that parents communicate to school which lunches they plan to purchase for their student. We order lunches based on this count, and surplus lunches are limited. At the end of the month parents will be billed for the lunches their students actually order.

The RMDS policy prohibits any staff member from using food as a disciplinary measure. For example, a child can not be denied a snack or lunch as a disciplinary measure.

PETS AT SCHOOL

Do not bring any pet to school without prior approval.

REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CHILD ABUSE

If you suspect your child is being abused by any staff member, Colorado state law requires that the school address the complaint by filing an official report with the Department of Social Services as well as the local police department. If at any time you suspect abuse, please come to the office and speak with the Director. Official reporting forms are maintained in the office. Once the complaint has been registered and the forms filled out, the proper authorities will be contacted.

SCHEDULES

All staff are expected to post their daily schedules either in the classrooms or in the hallway adjacent to the classroom. Additionally, any scheduled field trips will be documented on the monthly calendar and posted on the communication board in the reception area.

SMOKING

Federal Law: Smoking is prohibited in any kindergarten, elementary or secondary school serving children under the age of 18 years if federal funds are used in the school. 20 U.S.C.A. § 6083 (2005). This also includes all activities before and after school.

TOILETING FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

While the preschool program prefers that children are toilet trained upon enrollment, we realize that this can not always be accomplished. If your child is not toilet-trained and requires diaper changes, parents are expected to furnish an adequate supply of diapers and wipes to use with their child. Each child's diapering supplies will be clearly labeled for that child's use. Staff will utilize standard universal precaution measures when changing diapers (e.g. wearing latex gloves and washing hands immediately after a diaper change). If you are notified that your child's diapering supplies are running low, please be sure to replenish them in a timely manner.

TRANSPORTATION/BUS

Transportation is an arrangement between each family and their school district. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the transportation department if their child will not be riding the morning or afternoon vehicle.

If the child is not at the pickup point within 5 minutes of the designated time, the van and/or bus will leave. If the parent does not arrive within 5 minutes of the designated drop-off time, policy states that the child will be taken to the nearest police station.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's bus or bus driver, please contact your district's transportation office.

Jefferson County School District:	North Route: 303-982-1998
	South Route: 303-982-9057
	Central Route: 303-982-2224
Denver Public School District:	303-825-2611
Douglas County School District:	303-387-6155
Cherry Creek Public School District:	720-886-7465
Clear Creek County School District:	303-567-3865
Boulder Valley School District	303-447-5120
Kids Wheels	303-202-2700

WEATHER CONDITIONS

To find out if RMDS will be closing or delayed due to inclement weather, please follow the steps below:

1. Watch television channels 2, 4, or 9 for up-to-date information regarding school closure. Rocky Mountain Deaf School will be listed on the captions.
2. Check our website for information regarding school closure.

*Even if we are open, evaluate your decision to bring your child to school based on the road conditions near your house, temperature, etc. Our highest priority is for you to be safe!

We have three additional days built into our calendar, so that we will not have to make up days for closing due to weather. If we have more than 3 snow days, then we may need to revise our original calendar

COMMUNICATION

EVALUATION

Evaluation and progress monitoring is a daily process as teachers and parents monitor the learning of each student. Report cards or progress reports will be sent home four times per year.

COMMUNICATING CONCERNS/SUGGESTIONS

All parents' suggestions and concerns are considered valuable and will be addressed. Ideas and feedback help us make continuous improvements in our education program. We will actively work with you in resolving problems that may arise. Parents should direct their concerns by speaking to and/or scheduling a conference with their child's teacher(s).

GENERAL COMMUNICATION ON CAMPUS

RMDS is a bilingual school that values both ASL and English. We recognize the importance of a communication environment that is accessible to all people. To achieve this goal, American Sign Language is used as the primary mode of communication in public areas, with some special exceptions. We recognize that not all persons on campus will be fluent or skilled in ASL. When speaking with a deaf person, we have developed a hierarchy of options, if one method fails then try the next one on the list.

- American Sign Language (or other signing including PSE or gestures)
- Write notes on paper
- Ask someone to serve as an interpreter

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences with the teacher are helpful in keeping you informed of your child's progress and ways in which you might be of assistance to him/her at home. Scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held twice each year. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher for a phone conference or to arrange for an in-person conference if you need

SAFETY AND HEALTH INFORMATION

ENTERING THE BUILDING

All persons entering Rocky Mountain Deaf School must check in first at the office and obtain a visitor's pass.

EVACUATION PLAN FOR GENERAL SAFETY

If a situation was to occur and we felt the safety of our students could be in jeopardy, it would be best to evacuate the school site. We will walk our students across Youngfield to the Little Theater Dance Studio. We will retain the students at that site until their parents can arrive and pick them up. Students would only be released to their parents or other persons who are listed on their emergency card.

If we evacuate, we will telephone you to inform you of our situation. We will also leave a message on our phone and website.

If a "lock-down" is called, that means all doors and windows must be locked and be inaccessible from outside until further notice. Lock downs occur when the police advise us of a dangerous situation in the area (e.g. criminal activity). Upon notification from the police, the entire facility is locked down with no inside or outside access until the police notify us that the situation is clear.

Throughout the year, we will have scheduled fire, tornado, and lockdown drills. This ensures that staff and students are familiar and comfortable with emergency procedures.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

Medication includes anything such as cough drops, Vitamin C, other vitamins, throat lozenges, herbs, etc.

For the SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF YOUR CHILD(REN), medication policies must be followed by school personnel when dispensing medication to any student. Medication can be administered at school ONLY under the following conditions:

A fully completed and signed school district Medication Agreement Form (Form 924) MUST accompany the medication for each medication to be administered. This applies throughout the school year.

- For prescription medication, you **MUST** have the Medication Agreement form signed by a Parent and Doctor, and it **MUST** be in the **Original Pharmacy Container** with the student's name, the current prescription medication and label. Medication can be given only as directed on the prescription bottle. Medication changes cannot be implemented until the school receives a FAX from or note signed by the physician.
- For non-prescription/ over-the-counter medication, you **MUST** have a Medication Agreement Form signed by a parent.
- Both prescription and non-prescription medication **MUST** be in the original container.
- With each new medication or change in medication a new fully completed and signed medication form **MUST** be given to the school.
- Over-the-counter medication dosages must correlate with the pharmaceutical company's stated guidelines or a statement from the physician must indicate otherwise. School district personnel **cannot be responsible** for cutting any medication (scored by the pharmaceutical company or un-scored). Most pharmacies will cut the pills if you ask.
- Elementary school students may not carry their own medication at school unless otherwise indicated by a note from the physician (i.e., if they must carry an inhaler). Reasons for keeping the medication in the office include: the amount of medication is to be given accurately and the time it is given will be documented, the medication is not subject to being lost or misused, other students do not have potential access to the medication.
- Under unique circumstances and requirements, a student twelve years of age or older may carry his or her own medication. If you feel this might be appropriate for your child, please contact the school nurse for further information.
- The school district does not stock aspirin. Tylenol will be administered only with parent's signed consent. This consent is on the emergency card. Tylenol can be given by school personnel for the following reasons only:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| - Fever over 102 F | -Toothache |
| - Headache not due to head trauma | -Menstrual cramps |
| -Muscle or bone pain due to trauma | -Earache |

RELEASE OF STUDENT(S)

If you need to release your child prior to the end of school, all parents or persons authorized to pick up students must come to the front office and sign their child out. These procedures are necessary to ensure the safety of your children.

There are three ways in which a child may be released at the completion of the school day:

- The parent may pick up the child.
- The parent may notify the staff that someone other than a parent or those

persons listed on the permission to pick-up list is picking up the child. Parents must notify the staff in writing. The staff may ask for a description of the person and also ask to see the person's driver's license for verification.

- Authorized School District Transportation (School Bus, Van, Etc.)

STUDENT EMERGENCY CARDS

Each year a Student Emergency Card is required for parents to update and return to school. It is *very* important that the school has current information in order to contact parents in case of an emergency. Please be aware that if a student has a medical emergency and we are unable to contact parents, we must call 911 in which case the parents can be billed for the cost.

STUDENT ILLNESS POLICY

If your child becomes ill or injured at school, the office will attempt to notify parents immediately. Therefore, it is critical that the office have the most current contact information for you throughout the *year*. Sick or injured children will be kept in the clinic aide area until the parent can come pick the child up. If the child is injured, an accident report will be filled out by the supervising adult, signed off by the Director and sent to you within 48 hours of the accident. A copy of the accident report is also sent to Risk Management at the district offices. If a child is seriously injured and requires immediate emergency care, 911 will be called and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital.

Students will be sent home if s/he:

- Has an oral temperature of 100 degrees or more;
- Has diarrhea;
- Has symptoms of illness (chills, body ache, headache, possible fever, sore throat, stomachache, stiff neck)
- Has vomited and has other symptoms of illness;
- Has an identified active case of head lice;
- Experiences any sort of head injury accompanied by symptoms (listed on head injury sheet);

Students will be sent home with a recommendation for medical attention if s/he;

- Has complaints of sore throat or earache and with an oral temperature of 100 degrees or more;
- Has no temperature but complains of sore throat, and white patches are found in the throat;
- Has no temperature but there is evidence of discharge from the ear;
- Has extreme redness of the *eyes* along with itching and possibly drainage from the *eye*;
- Has a rash that does not have a known cause;
- Is injured or suffers from an animal bite or has stepped on a nail

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS SICK - WHEN CAN THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL?

- Fever symptoms of flu or other illness - Can return to school 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal or when symptoms of illness are no longer present.
- Vomiting/diarrhea - Can return to school 24 hours after last episode.
- Sore throat/earache - Can return after child has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- Head lice - Can return after being treated with medicated shampoo (can be in the same day).
- Pink eye/skin rashes - Can return after examination by a medical professional or after the symptoms disappear.
- Students can be in school with cold sores and the common cold (unless there are other symptoms of illness, including temperature 100 degrees or more).
- Chicken Pox - A student who has the chicken pox cannot return school until all of the sores have formed crusts or scabs.

PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES

OUT of SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Sleepovers and birthday parties are great social events for our students to interact after school, however invitations **are expected to be exchanged outside of school via mail**. Please don't send party invitations to be distributed in class unless you intend to invite the entire class to the event.

APPAREL/PERSONAL PROPERTY

Each student has a cubby or locker, depending on grade, to keep personal items in. All personal items brought to RMDS should be labeled. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings. **Please do not send toys**, except for "show and tell" for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. If a child brings a toy, it will be confiscated and returned to the child at the end of the day. If the problem persists, the office will keep the toy(s) until the parents can come pick it up.

MONDAY FOLDERS

As part of our ongoing effort to improve communication with families and keep them informed, we use "Monday folders" that are sent home at the beginning of each week. The folder typically contains information from your child's teacher, as well as announcements about upcoming events. Once a month, the director will send home a newsletter and calendar to communicate school news and upcoming events. **PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S MONDAY FOLDER!!!**

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS

Please set aside time each evening for completing homework assignments. Your child needs your support and guidance. Check the backpack or folder daily for papers. If a problem or issue arises regarding homework, please feel free to speak with your child's teacher.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff is expected to communicate directly with parents about student progress or concerns.

Staff will use monthly and/or weekly parent letters as a means of distributing written information.

Staff is expected to treat the children, each other and parents in a respectful, constructive manner.

Staff working directly with children are required by Colorado State Statute to report any evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

Behavioral concerns will be discussed whenever necessary with the parent(s) and/or with teachers

