



Parent Handbook 2022-2023

Hello and welcome to Tigers' Den!

We hope you will find answers to all of your questions here. Parents are responsible for reading and understanding all of the information in this handbook. Please let us know if you have additional questions.

Marna Wetherbee, Tigers' Den Director
978-540-2555 or tigersden@littletonps.org

General Information

Tigers' Den provides high quality, before and after school care in an enriching atmosphere with supervision by a professional, caring staff. The program is designed with an appropriate balance of structure and choices, in line with the developmental level of each child. Social, emotional growth is nurtured through many different age appropriate choices each day. Indoor activities may include arts and crafts, games, puzzles, science projects, use of imagination and free play. Various gross motor activities are offered in the school gym. Tigers' Den goes outside all year round, where children may participate in group games, hikes, or free choice on the school playground. Children are supervised at all times by experienced, adult staff members.

Tigers' Den is a non-profit, self-supporting program that is administered by the Littleton School Department, located within two elementary schools, the Russell Street School and the Shaker Lane School. Children enrolled in the Littleton Public Schools from kindergarten through grade five may attend on a space available basis. Tigers' Den does not discriminate based on race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

The program schedule follows the school calendar of 180 days. Care is not provided on holidays, during school vacations or on days that school is closed unexpectedly due to inclement weather, facility and/or COVID-19 issues. When the Littleton schools are closed, Tigers' Den is closed.

Hours of Operation: School Days Only

7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

TD will close at 4:00 p.m. on the day before Thanksgiving and the last day of school.

Before School

7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.

TD Grades K-5 - Russell Street School Site

Children from kindergarten through grade five may arrive any time after 7:00 a.m., with transportation provided by the parent. Russell Street students are dismissed at the designated time to start their academic day. Shaker Lane students take a bus to their school.

After School

School Dismissal to 6:00 p.m.

TD Grades K1 After School Arrival – Shaker Lane School Site

Children are dismissed from their classrooms to the SL cafeteria where they are greeted by Tigers' Den staff.

TD Grade 2 After School Arrival - Russell Street School Site

Second grade children attend Tigers' Den at the Russell Street School site. When the Shaker Lane school is dismissed, second graders are placed on a bus by their teachers. Upon arrival at the Russell Street school, they are greeted by Tigers' Den staff.

TD Grades 3-5 After School Arrival - Russell Street School Site

Children are dismissed from their classrooms to the RSS cafeteria where they are greeted by Tigers' Den staff.

Tuition

Tigers' Den is a non-profit self-supporting program. Operating funds are derived from tuition fees. It is presumed that the child is enrolled for the full academic year. The monthly tuition fee is based upon the total tuition for the school year and is then divided by ten. Current rates are posted on the Tigers' Den website and subject to change with 30 days notice. Tuition payments are due the first of each month September through June. A ten-dollar late fee is charged for accounts that are outstanding on the 11th day of the month. If withdrawal from the program is necessary, one month's written notice to the director is required. ***No refunds are made for absences or unused tuition.***

There are multiple ways to pay your tuition. You may sign up for automatic withdrawal from your checking account, use a credit card online or submit checks or cash. You will not receive a bill unless you incur additional fees during a month.

If you require a receipt for your payments, please complete the Receipt Request Form and be as specific as possible. We will not process a receipt without a written request.

If you wish to suspend your child's attendance to our program, you may place your child on hold for up to three months, with an imposed monthly fee of half the regular monthly tuition. After three months, your child will not be guaranteed placement should you choose to return.

Attendance Procedures

Parents are responsible for informing your child's school and classroom teacher of your child's participation at Tigers' Den and of his or her schedule, including any changes throughout the year.

It is the parents' responsibility to notify Tigers' Den, the school and classroom teacher, when a child will not attend Tigers' Den on a regularly scheduled day. **A phone message or email must be received at Tigers' Den by 2:00 p.m. on regular school days and by 11:00 a.m. on Early Release days.** Notifying the school is not enough. The school secretaries and nurses are not responsible for notifying us if your child is absent from school or being dismissed early. If your child is absent from school, s/he may not attend Tigers' Den that day. Many parents find it most convenient to send one email to all three parties who need to know.

Missing Child/Late Notice Fee

If your child does not arrive at Tigers' Den on a scheduled day and we have not received notice from you before the deadline mentioned above, you will be charged a **\$10.00 Missing Child/Late Notice Fee**. We will do all we can to verify your child's whereabouts. If we have not heard from you and cannot reach you or determine the child's location within 30 minutes, the police will be notified that your child is missing. Repeated failure to notify Tigers' Den of your child's attendance will result in termination from the program.

Parents are required to call or send an email
when their child will be absent from Tigers' Den.

Tigers' Den K-5 Before School, Russell Street School Site, 978-540-2555 or tigersden@littletonps.org
Tigers' Den 2-5 After School, Russell Street School Site, 978-540-2555 or tigersden@littletonps.org
Tigers' Den K-1 After School, Shaker Lane School Site, 978-339-9078 or tigersdensl@littletonps.org

Pick Up Responsibilities

The parent or designated guardian is responsible for picking up and signing out the child by closing time. Written notification must be made in order for persons other than the parent or guardian to pick up the child. Authorization can be designated through initial paperwork/forms or by sending a handwritten note or emailing later in the year, whenever necessary. Authorized individuals who are not known to the staff will be asked to supply proof of identification (e.g. driver's license, photo I.D.) Children must stay with the staff person on duty until they are signed out by their parent or other authorized pick up person.

Late Pick Up

Picking up after 6:00 p.m. will result in a fee of \$1.00 PER MINUTE, for which the parent will be billed. Picking up later than 6:00 p.m. three times, will require a conference with the Director to discuss an alternate pick up plan. *Repeated lateness will result in termination from the program.*

Extra Hours

If there is space available, your child may attend Tigers' Den on an unscheduled day. Please notify us in advance of your need. These hours will be tallied, and you will receive a bill at the end of the calendar month.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on Early Release days, s/he will not be able to attend as extra hours.

Early Release Days

The school calendar can be found on the Littleton Public Schools website under the About tab. Early Release days are indicated by the letter "A" meaning all schools are released three hours earlier than a regular school day; or by the letters "EC" meaning elementary students are released 3 hours earlier than a regular school day for Parent Conferences.

Special theme activities, presenters, field trips or on-site programs are scheduled on Early Release days. Buying lunch from the school cafeterias is an option on all Early Release days, by request, in advance. The day before Thanksgiving and the last day of school are Early Release days. **Tigers' Den will close at 4:00 p.m. on both of those days.** Only those scheduled to attend on the day that an Early Release falls will be eligible to attend TD on those days. School lunch is not available for the day before Thanksgiving and the last day of school.

Field Trips

Field trips are occasionally planned on Early Release days for children in grades 3-5. Parents receive permission slips for field trips two weeks before the event and must return the form by the specified deadline *whether or not the child plans to participate in the field trip.* Space is limited.

Delayed Opening Due to Weather

When schools delay opening due to inclement weather, Tigers' Den also delays opening for the same amount of time. If school is delayed 90 minutes, Tigers' Den will open at 8:30 a.m. If your child is not registered for the Before School Program, but you find you need care due to the delay, please call us before dropping off. We try very hard to get as many staff members as possible in early, but if traveling is difficult, we will have to limit our number of children to only those enrolled in the Before School Program. If we can accommodate your child, you will incur an additional fee for the time.

Emergency Early Dismissal Due to Weather

When school closes early due to inclement weather, Tigers' Den will remain open whenever possible. Parents are asked to pick up their children as soon as possible or make alternate care arrangements and notify Tigers' Den of the change. *(You may receive a message saying that all after-school activities are canceled. Tigers' Den is not considered an after-school activity.)*

Communication

Parents are required to complete all necessary enrollment, medical and permission forms in order for their children to participate in program activities. Please notify the Tigers' Den office when changes occur such as address, phone number (home or work), email address, medical information or doctor's phone. ***The schools will not notify us of these changes.***

Tigers' Den typically uses email as a means of communication. A newsletter is published and emailed to parents several times throughout the year. Other important messages are sent to certain families for various reasons. Parents are responsible for reading all emails from Tigers' Den. General notices are sometimes posted in Tigers' Den dismissal areas.

It is always helpful when parents inform the Tigers' Den staff of any substantial family changes or concerns. Non-custodial parents may receive all Tigers' Den information if contact information is provided. Parent conferences may be scheduled any time at the request and convenience of the parent and/or staff.

Staffing

Staff members work together in a professional, supportive, and cooperative manner to create an atmosphere in which children are safe and nurtured. Tigers' Den strives to hire individuals who have prior experience and training in caring for children. Many of our staff members have certificates and degrees in child development and related fields.

The Director is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the program with an emphasis on safety, enrichment, and professionalism. Program philosophy, policies, procedures, and financial matters are administered by the Director. The Director is also responsible for personnel assignment, training, supervision, and evaluation.

Coordinators and Group Leaders plan the daily program of activities. They are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children. Staff Assistants work with other staff members where needed and interact with children to encourage their participation in the program. High School Assistants are hired to serve as positive role models for the children and to assist other adult staff members.

Health

Parents are responsible for completing all Tigers' Den forms and keeping the staff up to date about your child's health throughout the school year. The same guidelines that apply to the school day apply to Tigers' Den. If your child is ill (e.g., temperature, sore throat, etc.) s/he is not to attend the program. Should your child become ill while at Tigers' Den, you will be notified and will be responsible for picking up your child immediately. If your child is absent from school, s/he may not attend Tigers' Den that day. Please inform the program when your child is ill with any serious illness or contagious disease. Your child should not return to Tigers' Den until such time as s/he is no longer contagious. Parents are notified immediately of any injury requiring emergency care beyond minor first aid. Parents are notified of any first aid treatment administered to their child.

Medications

Dispensing of medication must be arranged with the school nurse during the school day. Tigers' Den does not have a nurse and cannot administer medication. Please see your school handbook for more information on this policy.

Children must not transport medication of any kind, including cough drops or other OTC medications.

Personal Belongings

Each child has an assigned space to store personal items such as outerwear, school materials, lunch boxes, etc. Please make sure that all items are labeled with your child's name. A lost and found area is provided. A change of clothing (including underwear) for emergency use should be in the backpack at all times, especially for children in grades K-2. We strongly discourage children from bringing in items from home such as toys, electronic devices, or other personal belongings.

Homework

When staffing allows, Tigers' Den at the Russell Street School provides a quiet homework space several days a week for children in grades 2-5. Parents who would like their children to make use of the homework space may encourage their child and inform the coordinator of their wishes. Tigers' Den staff members will monitor their attendance but are not able to tutor or enforce completion of assignments.

Food Services, Snack, Allergies

All children receive an afternoon snack upon arrival at Tigers' Den. Parents may supplement the program snack with additional items from home. Tigers' Den children may purchase lunch and/or milk on Early Release days by using their school lunch accounts or cash, in accordance with the School Department's Food Service Program.

Parents are responsible for notifying Tigers' Den in writing about any allergies or requirements for sitting at a separate table while eating.

Non-TD After School Activities

In addition to the Tigers' Den daily activity schedule, parents may enroll their children in non-TD after-school activities offered on site at the Russell Street & Shaker Lane Schools. For example, this would include Littleton Park and Recreation classes and scouting. Attendance details must be communicated to TD staff in advance. The adults supervising the outside activity must take responsibility for escorting the child directly to the parent or TD staff when that activity ends. Contact the TD staff for more information on this process.

Behavior Management

Tigers' Den provides a positive environment that is supportive and nurturing for each child. Children are expected to be respectful and cooperative with others. Parents must understand the Tigers' Den behavioral expectations and support them at home.

A contract, specifying behavioral expectations for children is signed by child and parent at the start of the year. Children are expected to comply with the following Tigers' Den rules:

- Respect other people, their feelings, their differences, and their belongings.
- Follow directions and respond to staff requests.
- Use equipment properly and safely and return it when finished.
- Refrain from unsafe physical contact (hitting, kicking, biting), using profane language or spitting.
- Remain within specific boundaries designated by staff until called for by a parent or guardian.

Positive behavior modification techniques are used when intervention is necessary by a staff person. If difficulties persist or if the infraction involves hitting, kicking, biting, swearing, or a discriminatory comment or action, appropriate immediate consequences will be put into place. If problems continue, the child, parent(s), coordinator and/or director confer to develop a plan that prevents repeated incidents. Conferences between Tigers' Den staff and parents are often helpful for partnering and problem solving. Repeated difficulties with behavior may result in suspension or dismissal from the program at the discretion of the Director. Unfortunately, Tigers' Den is not a good fit for all children.

Parent Questions and Concerns

The Tigers' Den Director and Site Coordinators are always open to answering your questions and/or addressing concerns. Please do not hesitate to email or call us at any time. We will likely respond within 48 hours, before or after program time.

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Thank you for reading the Tigers' Den Parent Handbook! :)