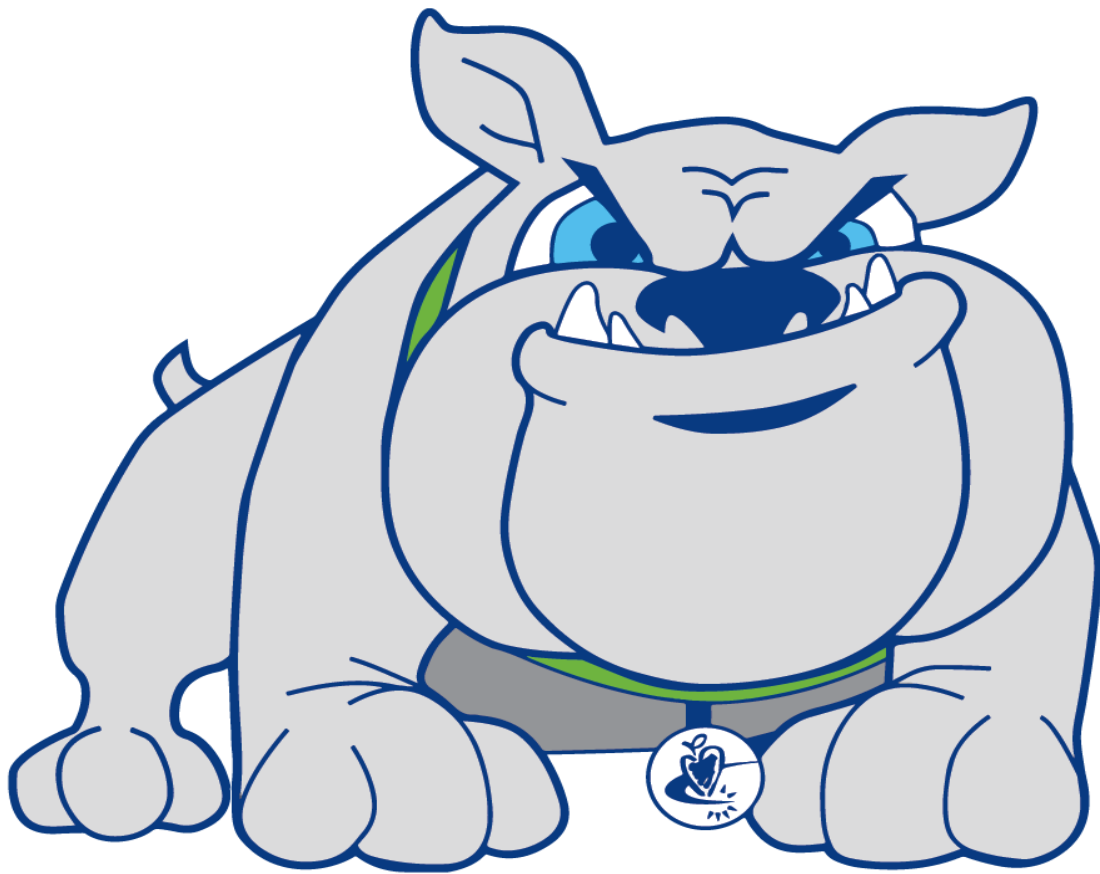


LifeScape

Vista Park Specialty School

2801 S. Kiwanis Ave. • 605-444-9886



Parent Handbook 2026-2027

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History of LifeScape

In 2014, Children's Care Hospital & School and South Dakota Achieve joined together to form LifeScape.

Children's Care was Built to Treat Children Recovering from Polio

Children's Care Hospital & School opened in 1952 as the private, non-profit "Crippled Children's Hospital & School," a citizen grass roots effort to provide rehabilitation and education to children recovering from polio. Until then, children often never returned to school after recovering from the acute phase of their illness, as buildings were seldom accessible. As the polio threat waned, children with other disabilities were admitted, but the early mission of the organization was to serve children with physical disabilities only. More children were "mainstreamed" into public schools in the 1970s, and Crippled Children's began serving children with more complex disabilities – the result of modern medicine's ability to save sicker and more premature babies. Also, in the 1970s, the organization began serving children in their own communities through the outreach program. The organization acquired an outpatient center in Rapid City in 1985 and was able to provide services throughout the state. In 1994 Crippled Children's was renamed to Children's Care Hospital and School but continued with the same tradition of service and excellence. In 2012 Children's Care celebrated its 60th anniversary.

South Dakota Achieve Began with 11 Families Who Wanted to Keep their Children in their Home Community

The story of the former South Dakota Achieve began in 1958, when 11 families in Sioux Falls began to seek services for their children and others with intellectual disabilities, wanting them to have a chance at meaningful lives in their own community. The Sioux Chapter Workshop for the Mentally Retarded was formed and provided day services only. The name evolved to Sioux Vocational Services to reflect the progression of programs offered, and in 1969, residential services began. Special education laws were enacted in 1975, and schools started serving children with intellectual disabilities. Sioux Vocational then began specializing in supporting adults and older adolescents through residential, work, and volunteer programs. In 1979, Sioux Vocational became South Dakota's first agency to be nationally accredited, challenging it to be more responsive and innovative in its services. As a result, the agency became wheelchair accessible, offered retirement and other meaningful day opportunities, and focused on finding community employment opportunities. It also launched specialized programs for those with traumatic brain injuries and Autism Spectrum Disorders. In 2006, the name became South Dakota Achieve, and in 2013, the organization celebrated 55 years of service.

The Two Organizations Joined to Form LifeScape in 2014

The two organizations followed similar paths over the years. During a conversation over a cup of coffee between Achieve's CEO Anne Rieck McFarland and Children's Care interim CEO Dave Timpe, the idea of joining the two organizations sparked. The Boards of Directors of both organizations supported exploring the possibilities. Similar missions, vision, and values, as well as unique areas of expertise encouraged the Boards to take action and seriously explore the merger of these two strongly, highly respected agencies. After nearly eighteen months of exploration, the boards of the two organizations voted unanimously to join South Dakota Achieve and Children's Care. On April 1, 2014, LifeScape was formed.

LifeScape continues to provide all of the services of Children's Care Hospital & School and South Dakota Achieve to an anticipated 4,500 children and adults through programs in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and many communities and school districts throughout South Dakota. By offering support throughout the lifespan, the two organizations are truly "better together."

Beginning July of 2017, LifeScape developed the Pathways to Life Program to a program for High School Students up to age 21 to address the IEP and to receive Pre-employment Transition Services, Community/Citizen skills, functional application of academic content, knowledge and skills to work and hold a job or to be a volunteer, and to develop independence in the home and integration within the community.

Our Mission

Empowering people
to live their best life.

Our Vision

LifeScape will be an **innovative organization**, providing **exceptional services** and **creative solutions** for people with **varied needs** and **complex care across their life span**.

Through **collaborative partnerships**, LifeScape will become a **destination for research**, and the development, implementation, and training of **technology-based solutions** to **improve the lives of people we support**.

Our Values

- ***Integrity***
- ***Compassion***
- ***Respect***
- ***Safety & Wellbeing***
- ***Fiscal Responsibility***
- ***Excellence***
- ***Accountability***



LifeScape

Creating Pathways. Improving Lives.

Educational Services

LifeScape Specialty Schools provide exceptional education services for individuals with specialized educational, therapeutic, and/or medical needs. Services are available for children birth through age 21. The educational program is approved through the South Dakota Department of Education and is a leader in the implementation of content-based individualized programming. LifeScape Specialty Schools adhere to the rules and regulations as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). LifeScape provides a variety of educational services based on the student's specific individualized learning, medical, and therapeutic needs. Options include 24-hour integrated residential and school services, day school services, dual enrollment with a local educational agency, extended school year services, in-house tutorial services, and Birth to Three services.

Students are given opportunities to participate in volunteering experiences and hands-on training to prepare them for either joining the workforce, securing a permanent volunteer job or both! While job placement isn't required, LifeScape Specialty School works Vocational Rehabilitation Services and provides job coaching to promote students' acquisition of skills to allow them to develop the necessary skills to secure and maintain a job. Employment options are supported and funded through the different South Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation supported employment options. Students will also work on developing their social and communication skills to assist them in knowing how to access community resources such as banking, transportation, social groups, shopping, fitness activities, and more.

School Hours

- The school day begins at 8:45 am and ends at 3:15pm. Staff are not available to accept Day Students until 8:30 am. Students may be brought inside and dropped off with LifeScape staff in the front lobby starting at 8:30am. School dismisses at 3:15 pm with Day Students must be picked up by 3:30pm.
- If your child needs to arrive late for school or leave early, please contact the Student attendance Line at (605) 444-9490 or notify your child's teacher. Student late arrivals and early departures are monitored, and excessive unexcused tardiness is reported to the referring school district for implementation of specific truancy policies.

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is necessary if students are to obtain the maximum benefit from their education experience. Students should only be excused from school for serious reasons. Missing school for unnecessary reasons will not only hamper students' education, but also hinder school efforts to educate the student.

Parents/guardians of absent students are to call the student attendance line (605) 444-9490 each day of absence and report reason for absence. Please also include any symptoms if the student is ill. Absences will be considered excused for reasons of the following: serious illness, injury, medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, weddings in the family, family emergencies, death in the family, and when students are official representatives of the school at school sponsored activities. **Parents are responsible for contacting busing/wheelchair services of the absence of their child.**

Notifications of unexcused absences will be sent to families and districts starting at 7 days of absences. After 10 days of absences, they may be in violation of state law and the potential consequences (SD 13-27-11). Excessive absences could lead to discharge from LifeScape residential and Specialty Schools. Attendance is reported each quarter on the Quarterly Progress Report. On-time arrival is also mandated by South Dakota State Law (SD 13-27-16) and excessive tardiness is required to be reported. Questions and concerns should be directed to the Special Education Director or your school district liaison.

Early Dismissals

LifeScape Specialty School conducts professional development for staff as indicated on the school calendar from 2:30-5:00 PM. On these days, school will be dismissed at 2:30 PM. During early dismissals Day Students should be picked up at the time specified on the school calendar.

Outside Appointments

Parents are requested to schedule all student appointments outside of the school day. When it is necessary for a student to be absent during the school day for appointments, etc., the parent/guardian must call (605) 444- 9490 or send a note with the student prior to the absence stating the reason and time for the early dismissal. For the safety of our students, we request that you clearly communicate with the classroom staff when you are taking and returning your child from the classroom.

Infinite Campus Messenger

Infinite Campus Messenger is the automated notification system which LifeScape utilizes to communicate with families, bus drivers, and school districts with any school-related information which may include but is not limited to: late starts, early dismissals, event reminders, emergency notifications, etc. To ensure that IC Messenger is effective in the ability to communicate with families, bus drivers, and school districts it is important that all parties have their phone and email information kept up to date with administration.

Inclement Weather

Late Starts and Closings – LifeScape Specialty School remains open at all times unless you are notified via the Infinite Campus Instant Notification System. **When the Sioux Falls Public School District closes, LifeScape Specialty School will start the formal school day one hour late but will have limited staff on site by 8:30 to cover Paratransit fixed schedule. We will be cancelling community-based learning activities on these days. Parents will be responsible for notifying Para-Transportation.**

In the event of inclement weather conditions which may impact the opening or dismissal of students, parents will be notified through Infinite Campus Messenger. When weather conditions warrant, parents and bus drivers are encouraged to use their discretion in sending their student to school or picking them up early. **Please leave a message on the Education Transportation Line at (605) 444-9490 if the student will be arriving late or leaving early so education staff can prepare accordingly.** Districts and parents/guardians are responsible for picking up the students. Should the situation arise where it is not safe to transport the students, the school district will be responsible for any extended stay costs.

Volunteers

Parents/guardians or other individuals wishing to volunteer at LifeScape Specialty school should contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (605)444-9621 in order to complete the appropriate paperwork and schedule a volunteer orientation. Volunteers must sign in and out in the front lobby of LifeScape.

Curriculum

The [South Dakota Content Standards](#) serve as expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. The review, revision, development, and feedback process involves stakeholders throughout the state of South Dakota and is an ongoing and critical component to ensure South Dakota students in every classroom receive current and relevant learning experiences. The goal is that all students will graduate college, career, and life ready. Content standards are set by the South Dakota Board of Education Standards. They are reviewed every five to seven years. Content standards do not mandate a specific curriculum.

Core Content Connectors (CCCs) are Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAAS) used for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in alternate assessment. CCCs guide the development of appropriate academic goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks that allow students the maximum engagement with the general curriculum and non-disabled peers as possible, with appropriate adaptations, simplifications, and modifications to grade-level materials and content.

LifeScope Specialty Schools instructional programs link to the SD State Standards and the Alternate Academic Achievement Standards connecting skills scope and sequence based on individualized comprehensive assessment of the students. Individual teams consider how each student is able to access instruction in State Standards in their development of the student's learning plan.

[Core Content Connectors in English Language Arts](#) address the following strands at each grade level:

- Habits and Dispositions • Reading at Word Level • Reading Informational Text • Reading Literary Text • Literary Writing • Informational Writing • Persuasive Writing • Writing Across All Types

[Core Content Connectors in Mathematics](#) address the following strands at each grade level:

- Data, Analysis, Probability, and Statistics • Geometry • Measurement • Numbers and Operations • Patterns, Relations, and Functions • Symbolic Expression

LifeScope teachers are provided with instruction and resources to support the integration and alignment of instruction to the state instructional content standards. Due to the highly specialized population served by LifeScope, unique and specialized curricula are used to address students' comprehensive needs. LifeScope uses evidence-based teaching and measurement strategies and procedures, along with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)-based curriculum. ABA-based curriculum and assessment may include but not limited to the ABLLS, PEAK, VBMAP, Assessment of Functional Living Skills, Essential for Living, and the Eden Curriculum. LifeScope has evidence-based curricula materials to match the teaching needs identified through these foundational curriculum assessment materials.

Young adults of transition age have the benefit of experiencing our Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES), a simulated work assessment and hands-on curriculum lab where students learn by doing in a structured environment. In the lab, students explore the following five career field areas: business/marketing, computer/technology, construction/industrial, processing/production, and consumer service. Students' complete tasks using real tools and equipment. These tasks start at a basic level and build in complexity as the students' skills increase. The lab simulates a real-world work environment, so students become employees and teachers become supervisors when they walk through the door. The PAES lab allows students to experience and practice job skills that help prepare them for the world of work as well as assist them in finding direction for their desired career paths.

The use of other evidence-based curricula is based on student need and academic skill set. LifeScope employs an administrative leadership team highly versed in the areas of instruction. This provides oversight and guidance to the daily instructional processes and development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Conferences & Progress Reporting

School-wide conferences are scheduled two times per year occurring prior to Winter Break and Spring Break. Additional parent conferences will be made available at the request of the parent/guardian of the student's team. Each student will have a progress report reflecting their school performance during the previous quarter. Fall quarter ends in November, Winter Quarter ends in February, Spring Quarter ends in May, and Summer Quarter ends in August. Progress reports will be sent out after the end of the quarter.

Progress Codes:

M – **Met Criteria** as specified on goal/objected

P – **Progress** has been made as seen by an increase in skill from previous reporting period.

I – **Insufficient** progress has been made this quarter or data has remained the same as previous quarters.

X – This goal objective was **not addressed** this quarter for specified reasons.

School Lunch Program

Nutrition Services

LifeScape Nutrition is committed to providing wholesome, nutritious meals every day to support student success. Lunch is served from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. All meals meet USDA Child Nutrition Program standards and can accommodate special dietary needs.

Special Dietary Needs

Does your child have food allergies, preferences, or require a specialized diet? LifeScape's team of Registered Dietitians, Registered Nurses, and Speech Therapists is here to support each student's unique needs. We are happy to provide accommodations. Please reach out and let us know how we can assist.

Did You Know?

Applications for free and reduced-price meals are distributed each year during the school admission process. These applications help secure meal reimbursement funding, and all individual information is kept strictly confidential. This data may also be used to support eligibility for grant funding.

Technology & Internet Use

Student safety on the Internet and network is an important part of each child's education program at LifeScape Specialty School. Annually the *Acceptable Network and Internet Use Policy for Students* and the *Adapted Acceptable Network and Internet Use Policy for Students* will be provided to parents/guardians for signature, and it must be returned to LifeScape. The first form is the longer of the two that outlines the policy in detail. The second form summarizes the information from the long form into a format that may be easier to understand for students. LifeScape will be having students sign these forms as well. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Computer Coordinator at 605-444-9495.

Birthdays

Each classroom recognizes each student's birthday in a special way. Classroom treats should be coordinated with the teacher ahead of time to address special dietary needs. Parents are asked to ensure that the treats do not contain peanut products, are ready to pass out to students, and easy to eat in the classroom. The teacher will determine the best time during the school day to celebrate. We are a latex free facility, and no latex balloons are allowed. Mylar balloons are welcome.

Parent/Guardian Communication and Visitation

Purpose: At LifeScape Specialty Schools we encourage parent/guardian involvement. This may be classroom observation, volunteering, field trip participation, or other school activities. However, we need to be certain that we are maintaining the instructional time and safety in the classrooms and the school. With that in mind, please follow these guidelines for parent/guardian visitation.

- A. **Parents who want to observe their child in the classroom must first contact the teacher in order to set up an appropriate time.** When observing in your child's room, please find a seat designated by the classroom teacher. Sitting right next to your child may cause your child to lose focus on the teacher and lesson. Therefore, this seat will not be right next to your child.
- B. We know there are times that the parent needs access to the teacher for questions. If you have questions, please contact the teacher via e-mail or a phone call to arrange a time for you and the teacher to talk. It may be more convenient to ask while doing an observation, but that takes the teacher's focus off the students. **Students are our number one priority.** Therefore, please call or e-mail to set up a time to talk. Typical times that teachers are available are 8:00-8:30 AM most days and after 3:45 PM. Other than these times, teachers are with students and will be focused on teaching, and teaching time cannot be interrupted.
- C. LifeScape strives to work with families to ensure great communication through phone calls, notes, and e-mails. Unfortunately, due to regulatory constraints we are only able to use text messaging through LifeScape corporate phones. You may obtain this number in the directory located on page 15 of the handbook. Teachers and staff are unable to provide their personal cell phone information.
- D. If you are bringing your child to school each morning and plan on walking them to the classroom, you must enter through the main lobby doors, you must stop at the front desk in the lobby, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass. Also, Guidelines 1 and 2 still apply.
- E. We encourage parents/guardians to visit; however, **other visitors will NOT be allowed in the classroom due to privacy issues (FERPA).** Other family members and friends are welcome to eat lunch with your child, but we must have received either a note or phone call from the parent/guardian before allowing them access to the student. Again, this is a safety measure to protect our students. If we have not received a letter or a call, we will attempt to contact you. If we are unable to get in contact with you, the visitor will not be allowed into the school building.
- F. Because over 60% of our students live in our residential facility, parent/teacher conferences are uniquely designed to occur just before a scheduled school break. Parents/Guardians may schedule time with the teacher when they arrive to visit or to take their child home for the break.
- G. To prevent the transmission of infectious illness, upon visiting, all parents/guardians and visitors will be informed about the presence of potential infectious illnesses. Residential students may be kept back in the residential area or may be in isolation.
- H. During periods of increased incidence of highly infectious diseases, restriction of visitors will be considered.
- I. Signage will be placed to inform visitors/vendors/volunteers of the risks of infection transmission as appropriate.
- J. Visitors will be asked not to visit if feeling ill or have signs/symptoms of infectious illnesses.
- K. Parents of residential students who would like to visit outside of the school day should contact their case manager or residential supervisor to make arrangements.

School Health Services

Health services will be available to students during the school day. The school nurse's schedule is 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM and can be reached at the e-mails and phone numbers listed below.

School Nursing Contacts:

- Kimberly Winckler, RN – Kimberly.winckler@LifeScapeSD.org 605-444-9906
- Kayla Hamilton, RN, Day School Nursing Supervisor – Kayla.Hamilton@LifeScapeSD.org 605-444-9628

School Nurse Services:

- Provide emergency care, assessments and interventions for illness and injury occurring during the school day.
- Provide individualized health plans for students with special health needs. Will request annual health information updates for all students and health plans as needed for students with medical diagnoses that could become emergencies at school i.e. seizures, diabetes, asthma, and allergies.
- Will determine what action to take if students become ill in school.
- Maintain a permanent health record for each student. This record will contain their immunization records, physician notes and orders, medications, and special health needs. The student's health record will be shared with school personnel that have legitimate educational interest in the student.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION: (Day Students Only)

- For a day student requiring prescription medication during the school day, the medication will be given with an order from a physician/licensed prescriber. Prescriptions may be faxed to our fax number at 605-444-9660.
- All medications must be in the original pharmacy labeled container. Each container should have the name and phone number of the pharmacy, student's name, physician's name, medication name, dosage, time to be given and route (oral, inhaled, etc.).
- Medication will be kept in the Health Office in a locked medication cart and administered by nurse staff.
- LifeScape nursing staff will not administer any medications that are not approved and regulated by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA).
- Medication will be returned or destroyed when discontinued, or at the end of the school year, in accordance with the procedure for medication destruction.
- The parent/guardian must immediately notify the school nurse of any changes in prescription medications.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION:

LifeScape has acetaminophen (generic Tylenol) and ibuprofen (generic Advil) available for students with complaints of headache and/or muscle aches. Parent/guardian permission and physician order must be on file for students to receive acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and any over the counter medications (OTC) at school. All (OTC) medications (e.g. cough/cold remedies, antihistamines, pain relievers, anti-inflammatories) to be administered at school must be sent in the original container.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

All students enrolled at LifeScape are required to show proof of immunizations according to the current South Dakota immunization law. If a student has not received the immunizations required by state law, the student will not be permitted to attend school until all such immunization requirements have been met. Refusal to receive immunizations without an approved exemption can lead to discharge from LifeScape specialty school.

HEAD LICE, FLEAS OR SCABIES:

If a student is found to have head lice, fleas or scabies, parents will be notified; and the student will be sent home. It is the expectation of the school that you and your student seek the appropriate medical attention and treatment immediately. Appropriate steps need to be performed in your home IN ADDITION to those being done for your student and family members. The student may return to school 24 hours after the treatment.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING AN ILLNESS:

If a student is ill with a fever (over 100.0) or has stomach flu related symptoms (vomiting and/or diarrhea), he/she must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. The student should not receive any fever reducing medicine or have a stomach flu related episode within that 24-hour period.

If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness (for example: strep throat), and has been prescribed an antibiotic treatment, he/she should be on the antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school.

With certain illnesses, children may need to be excluded from school for longer periods of time. For example, Influenza requires children to be absent from school for 7 days after onset of signs and symptoms or until 24 hours after fever and respiratory symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer. If you have questions regarding when your child can return to school following an illness, please reach out to one of our school nurses.

Alcoholic Beverages and/or Drugs

A student shall not possess, use, sell, offer to sell, conceal, transmit, give attempt to purchase, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal or illegally used drug including steroids, counterfeit (look-alike) drugs, or controlled substances, tobacco, marijuana, CBD products, vape products, or associated paraphernalia. "Possession" includes, but is not limited to, retention on the student's person or in a purse, backpack, wallet, locker, desk, or vehicle. A student shall not possess, use, sell, offer to sell, conceal, or transmit any drug-related paraphernalia. It is not a violation of the Code of Conduct if a substance is used for medical purposes in accordance with directions for use, in accordance with a valid prescription (if the substance is a prescription drug). Validly used/possessed substance must be (1) authorized by a medical prescription by an authorized health-care professional and kept in the original container, which shall state the student's name and directions for use and expiration date; or (2) if an over-the-counter drug, kept in the original container, which shall state directions for use. Medications must be checked in at school to ensure the safety of all students. Any violation will be addressed in coordination with the school resource officer, and as appropriate, with the student's parent/guardian, LEA, and team.

Weapons

A student shall not possess, transport, transmit, conceal or attempt to possess, transport, transmit, or conceal a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, fireworks, explosive ordnance or dangerous instrument, or "look-alike" counterfeit weapon, firearm, knife, or dangerous instrument. "Look -alike" weapons, firearms, knives, fireworks, explosive ordnance, or instruments include, but are not limited to, any object a reasonable person might consider under the circumstances a dangerous weapon, firearm, knife, fireworks, explosive ordnance or dangerous instrument. As used herein, "firearm" shall be defined as in 18 USC section 921 and shall include, but not be limited to, any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device as defined in 18 USC section 921 et seq. The definition of destructive device includes, but is not limited to, (1) any explosive, incendiary, or poisonous gas including, but not limited to, a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine, or a device similar to any of the devices described herein or (2) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described herein and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. As used herein, "knife" shall be defined as any instrument that possesses a pointed or sharp-edged blade of metal or other rigid material and that is designed or can be used for cutting, slicing, or stabbing; this definition shall include, but is not limited to, straight razors, utility knives, box cutters, ice picks, pocket knives, switchblades, and buck knives.

Any violation will be addressed in coordination with the school resource officer, and as appropriate, with the student's parent/guardian, LEA, and team.

Student Privacy

The privacy of each student is of utmost importance to LifeScape. The school adheres to the guidelines outlined by FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). Annually a consent will be provided to parents/guardians which must be returned to school administration. The consent will provide parents/guardians an opportunity to review and consent to the permissions of various topics in the school.

Safe School Environment

Weapons and instruments that could cause bodily harm to another person or used for intimidation purposes are not permitted on LifeScape premises. Upon the discovery of such weapons on the LifeScape premises local law enforcement will be contacted immediately. LifeScape Specialty School reserves the right to search desks, lockers, book bags, and coats. Please ensure that your child does not bring knives, guns, fireworks, toy weapons or any other weapons to school.

The following emergency procedures will be implemented as necessary:

- **School lockdown:** In the event of a threatening person/armed intruder within the LifeScape premises in which students and staff cannot be safely evacuated, students and staff will lock down in designated areas of their classroom. A command station will be set up within the building which will work directly with local law enforcement and communicate with classrooms as able via phone.
- **Fire:** in the event of a fire alarm activation students and staff are directed to move to the closest exit of the building. Fire drills are conducted every other month.
- **Severe thunderstorm and/or tornado warning:** In the event of a severe thunderstorm warning or a tornado warning within the Sioux Falls city limits students and staff of LifeScape will transition to the lowest level of the building or shelter in designated areas until the time the warning has been allowed to expire. Classroom are not allowed to leave the premises in the event of a warning. If a classroom is on a field trip at which time a severe weather warning is announced school administration will contact the teacher and/or staff with students on the field trip and ensure they are taking the appropriate measures to ensure the students are in the safest possible location. School will **not** dismiss during severe thunderstorm or tornado warnings until the warning is lapsed. Severe thunderstorm/tornado drills are done each spring.
- **School Evacuation:** In the event that a building emergency should occur (gas leak, explosion, etc.) it may be necessary to evacuate. Students and staff of LifeScape will be evacuated per the LifeScape Crisis Management Plan. Students and staff will move to O’Gorman High School across the street from LifeScape.

Upon the event of an actual emergency parents/guardians will be notified through Infinite Campus Messaging System. Parents should not attempt to enter LifeScape in the event that the school is participating in an emergency drill or if an actual crisis is taking place. If the crisis occurs while visiting the school, parents/guardians should take direction from the leadership. At no time should parents impede, challenge, or obstruct school or law enforcement personnel during an emergency.

Field Trips

Field trips provide a learning experience for students. School personnel and nursing determine student participation in field trips. Parents/guardians are welcome to join their child on field trips although due to bus rules and availability, it is asked that parents/guardians meet classrooms at the destination and will be responsible for any admission fees.

Bullying

LifeScape is committed to protecting its students, employees, and applicants for admission from bullying of any type. LifeScape believes that all students and employees are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws.

Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to have their cell phones in view or used in any area of the school or on the playground during the school day unless used for educational purposes approved by the classroom teacher. They must remain turned off, stored in a locker, backpack, or checked in with the classroom teacher during the school day.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. Students should refrain from wearing clothing with offensive pictures or words, clothing that is revealing (shirts must cover the stomach and chest areas and shorts must extend past the fingertips). Shoes must be worn unless a medical condition prevents the students from doing so. Students should have a seasonally appropriate spare set of clothing brought to school if their clothing becomes soiled during the school day. Students, when appropriate, are expected to have tennis shoes available for participation in fitness activities. Students must have outside weather gear appropriate for the weather conditions. Students (as health allows) will be expected to participate in recess/exercise activities outside unless a wind chill or heat index advisory are in place. Students participating in work experiences or community volunteering experiences are expected to have appropriate clothing for the experience.

School Directory

Education Staff

Name	Title & Email	Phone
Stephanie Sherard	VP of Education Services Stephanie.Sherard@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9629
Brittany Dawson	Principal Brittany.Dawson@lifescapesd.org	6905-444-9544
Shelly Bohy	Director of Special Education Michelle.Bohy@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9644
Maria Nei	Assistant Director of Special Education Maria.Nei@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9627
Katie Busser	Teacher Lindsay.edwards@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9895
Lindsay Edwards	Teacher Lindsay.Edwards@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9889
Kris Natte	Teacher Kris.Natte@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9907
Kim Winkler	School Nurse Kimberly.Winkler@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9906
Alysia Sly	Project Administrator Alysia.Sly@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9643
Kali KJose	Manager of Case Management Kali.kjose@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9564
Heidi Bakke	Exceptional Services Facilitator Heidi.Bakke@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9645
James Myers	Job Coach Facilitator james.myers@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9891
Christine Mann	Licensed Clinical Social Worker Christine.mann@lifescapesd.org	605-444-9560

Room Numbers

Room	Phone
Vista Park—Main Line	605-444-9886
Vista Park—Cell Phone	605-961-7659
Student Attendance/Transportation Inclement Weather Line	605-444-9490

Notification of Grievance Process

I understand that if I have a complaint or grievance, it will be addressed by LifeScape staff in the following process:

I can be assisted in the complaint or grievance by any LifeScape staff to resolve concerns.

1. If I feel my complaint is not resolved through this verbal process, I may request to file a grievance.
2. The appropriate director, in conjunction with the Director of Quality and Compliance will gather additional information involved in the grievance.
3. I understand the Director will provide written acknowledgment of the grievance and develop a plan of action within seven days and communicate the plan to the person and/or parent/guardian.
4. I understand if I do not feel the grievance is resolved to my satisfaction, a meeting, facilitated by the Director and/or Director of Quality and Compliance, will be called within 14 days.
5. If the grievance cannot be resolved, it will be forwarded to the administrator or designee.
6. I will be provided with a written copy of the resolution. If I feel the written summary is not satisfactory, a meeting may be arranged with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within 30 days to discuss the matter and bring it to closure.

I understand that I may file a complaint directly with South Dakota Department of Education at:

South Dakota Department of Education

800 Governors Dr.

Pierre, SD 57501

2026-2027 School Calendar



LifeScape
Specialty School

August 2026

- 7 End of Quarter
- 10-17 Summer Break-No School
- 17 Teacher Inservice-No School

September 2026

- 3 Parent Night, 3:30-5:30 PM
- 4 No School
- 7 Labor Day-No School/Office Closed
- 17 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 18 No School

October 2026

- 9-13 Native American Day Observed/Fall Break-No School
- 22 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM

November 2026

- 11 Veteran's Day Observed-No School
- 13 End of Quarter
- 19 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 25-27 Thanksgiving Break-No School
- 26-27 Office Closed

December 2026

- 14-18 Parent Teacher Conferences
- 23-31 Winter Break-No School
- 24-25 Office Closed

January 2027

- 1 New Year's Day-No School/Office Closed
- 4 Classes Resume
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observed-No School
- 21 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM

February 2027

- 12-15 President's Day Break-No School
- 18 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 26 End of Quarter

March 2027

- 5 Teacher Workday-No School
- 8 No School
- 18 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 22-25 Parent Teacher Conferences
- 26-29 Spring Break-No School

April 2027

- 4/15 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 23-26 No School

May 2027

- 17 No School
- 20 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM
- 28 End of Quarter
- 31 Memorial Day-Office Closed

June 2027

- 1-4 Summer Break-No School
- 24 Graduation

July 2027

- 5-9 Independence Day Break-No School
- 5 Independence Day Observed-Office Closed
- 22 Early Dismissal, 2:30 PM

August 2027

- 6 End of Quarter
- 9-13 Summer Break-No School
- 16 Teacher Inservice-No School

August 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
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October 2026						
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December 2026						
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February 2027						
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April 2027						
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June 2027						
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August 2027						
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September 2026						
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November 2026						
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January 2027						
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March 2027						
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May 2027						
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July 2027						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
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- No School
- Parent Teacher
- Holiday
- Parent Night
- Early Dismissal
- ★ Graduation
- End of Quarter



Subject to change

Notice of Privacy Practices

Policy Statement

All people supported by LifeScape or their guardians will receive a written notice of LifeScape's privacy practices in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Regulation.

Procedure

1. **Notice of Privacy Practices.** The Notice of Privacy Practices describes how Private Health Information may be used and disclosed. The Notice may be amended from time to time in accordance with regulatory changes. Private Health Information will not be used or disclosed in any manner that contravenes the Notice of Privacy Practices then in effect.
2. **Notice Will Be Posted.** The Notice of Privacy Practices that is currently in effect will be posted in a prominent location, will be available at the reception desk for families who request it, and will be posted on the LifeScape website.
3. **Amendments to the Notice.** The Privacy Officer or designee is responsible for maintaining, evaluating, and recommending amendments to the Notice of Privacy Practices. At all times, the Privacy Officer will follow the directives to the HIPAA Privacy Regulations and any clarifications of guidance issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.
4. **Written Acknowledgement.** Except in emergencies, when a new patient/person supported or their guardian complete the registration packet, a Notice of Privacy Practices will be included. The patient/person supported or their guardian will be asked to sign the Written Acknowledgement form.
5. **Refusal to Sign Acknowledgement.** If the person supported by LifeScape or their guardian indicates a desire not to sign the Acknowledgement form, the Admission's Liaison/designee will inquire about the reasons for the refusal and will inform them that signing the form simply indicates that the Notice has been received. If they still refuse to sign, the Admission's Liaison/designee will indicate on the acknowledgement form and place in the record:
 - That the person supported was provided a Notice and Written Acknowledgement form but refused to sign; The name of the staff member who provided the Notice and form;
 - Whether the staff member informed the person supported/guardian that signing the form merely indicates the acknowledgement that he or she received the Notice;
 - That the person supported/guardian nonetheless refused to sign; and
 - The time and date (approximately) of the conversation.
6. **Emergency Situations.** The admitting staff may provide a Privacy Notice to people supported whose first service occurs under emergency circumstances. No acknowledgement is required, but it will be documented in the chart that the Notice was provided.
 - The assigned person from the program will follow-up within 2 business days and send a Privacy Notice to the patient/person supported or their guardian if it was not provided at the time of admission.
 - The patient/person supported or their guardian will be informed in the letter that the acknowledgement simply indicates that he or she received the Notice.
 - They will be asked to sign the acknowledgement and return it to the assigned person in the stamped, addressed envelope provided.
 - In the event that the acknowledgement is not received, the assigned person will follow steps under #5 above for refusal to sign.

7. **Documentation.** The person's written acknowledgement of receipt of the Notice of Privacy practices, or the documentation explaining why written acknowledgement was not obtained, will be maintained in the person's record for a minimum of six years.

LifeScape Specialty School Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the [Name of school ("School")] receives a request for access.
 - a. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
 - a. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the [School] to amend a record should write the school principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - a. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
 - b. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Disclosures that Elementary and Secondary Schools May Make Without Consent:

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of post-secondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For more information, contact the Child and Adult Nutrition Services office at (605) 773-3413.

Learning to Advocate



LifeScape would like to share opportunities and updates related to issues involving advocacy.

Advocating for yourself or a loved one can be tough. It's hard to know where to start, and you often must explain your concerns to many people, multiple times. Change is difficult, and asking others to think differently can feel overwhelming. But in the end, advocacy can make a real difference, helping you or someone you love live their best life.

Here are some examples of how you can advocate:

- Sending a letter/email
- Telling your story live during session or via Zoom
- Talking to legislators 1:1

LifeScape is here to help you navigate becoming an advocate.



Scan to sign up to receive updates, to be an advocate during the legislative session, and to get notifications of any town hall events.

