

# PARENT HANDBOOK



## **BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM YMCA OF FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST**

### **CLAY COUNTY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

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**STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY**

YMCA OF FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST | [FirstCoastYMCA.org](http://FirstCoastYMCA.org)

# PARENT HANDBOOK

## Before and After School Program

### OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### OBJECTIVES

- To provide a safe and fun learning experience for children that includes a healthy snack, homework time, character development and physical activity
- To develop positive behavior through character development activities that focus on the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility
- To enhance physical fitness through active games, sports, exercise and education
- To support academic performance by providing daily homework assistance

### PARENT COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to keeping the program innovative, safe and fun. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with the Site Director. The best way to communicate with the Director is by email or calling to schedule a meeting outside of regular Before and After School program hours.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENT

Parents and guardians are responsible for the following:

- Timely payment of all program fees
- Student drop-off is no earlier than 6:30am daily (where applicable)
- Pick-up no later than 6:00pm each day
- Treat YMCA staff of the Before and After School program with respect and dignity
- Complete/Update the YMCA Registration Form

*A student may be dismissed from the program if a parent does not meet the above responsibilities on a consistent basis.*

### QUALITY STAFF

Each YMCA childcare site is staffed with qualified, professional individuals. They receive comprehensive training and are locally and federally screened, in accordance with state licensing requirements.

Staff to child ratio:

- The YMCA provides a ratio of 1 staff person per 12 children for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- A 1:15 ratio is used for Second grade and above

Before and After School employees receive training in the following areas:

- CPR, First-Aid, and AED certified
- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Risk Management
- YMCA Code of Conduct
- 40 hour state mandated childcare training (DCF licensed programs)
- More than 10 hours of in-service training annually (DCF licensed programs)

In addition, YMCA Before and After School Childcare Credentialed Directors also complete the following:

- Department of Children and Families Director's Credentialing requirements
- Department of Children and Families Staff Credentialing requirements
- 10 hours of Special Needs Appropriate Practices Training
- Early Childcare Professional Certificate (ECPC)
- 120 hours of early childhood instruction and minimum of 480 contact hours with children

Elementary Before and After School programs are licensed childcare programs regulated by the State of Florida Department of Children and Families. Middle School programs follow all YMCA of the USA policies and regulations. Please contact you Site Director if you have additional questions.

## **GETTING STARTED**

You may enroll your child with YMCA at the program site and at the YMCA branches. Please complete a registration form, pay the registration fee, and the first week's fee. You may make payments through EFT, check, money order, or online. Your child's registration should be processed and submitted to the site prior to their attendance in the program. NOTE: The Y is unable to provide care to children who are not registered.

**Enrollment is open to any child currently in Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grade and attending the school where the YMCA Before and After School program is offered.**

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

YMCA Before and After School is open Monday through Friday. Select sites provide morning care, starting at 6:30am and lasting until start of the school day. Afternoon care begins at each school's dismissal time and ends at 6:00pm. Times may vary by site. Contact your Before and After School site for specific hours.

## **LATE PICK UP**

At the YMCA, we understand life does not always go as planned. If you realize that you will be late picking up your child from care, we ask that you notify the YMCA. If you are late picking up your child, a late fee will be assessed. **The late pick up fee is \$1 per minute, per child after 6:00pm.** To avoid having to pay a late fee, we strongly urge you to authorize multiple individuals to pick your child up from care. Please remind any authorized signer that a valid photo ID is required to sign your child out of the program. Excessive tardiness may result in the dismissal of your child from the program.

## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

For your convenience we provide three options for payment:

- **Automatic Bank Draft:** Parents may choose to have a card or checking account on file with the YMCA and linked to their Before and After School account. Payments will be set to automatically withdraw on your specified due dates. Payments may be set up to come out weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- **Online:** Parents may pay online at [www.FCYMCA.org](http://www.FCYMCA.org) .
- **Check or Money Order:** Checks and money orders should be paid at your child's site each Monday for the following week of service. The Site Director will have a place to turn in payments. Please make check payable to the "YMCA". Please write your child's name in the MEMO section of the check. Checks may take up to nine days to fully process through your account. Please see your Site Director for specific account questions.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide the YMCA with current up to date bank or credit card information throughout the term of the program. Should any program draft not be honored by the parent's bank, for any reason, the parent is still responsible for the payment, plus any applicable service charge assessed by the YMCA. The parent must provide, in writing, any changes to their account information or draft frequency 30 days in advance.

Payments received late may jeopardize your child's enrollment in the program and will be subject to additional fees. Fees must be paid weekly regardless of attendance. **Families may not register for any other programs or membership until any Before and After School outstanding balances are paid.**

## **REFUNDS**

Non-attendance does not entitle a participant to a refund. No refunds or adjustments will be granted for partial weeks missed due to illness, vacation or when YMCA programs are cancelled due to inclement weather. All refunds or program credits given for other reasons are issued on a case-by-case basis. The YMCA reserves the right to apply any credit due to other outstanding balances. Refunds are issued within 30 days of cancellation. The registration fee is non-refundable.

## **COLLECTIONS**

The YMCA is using a third party to assist in the collection of returned checks and bank drafts. If a check or bank draft is returned for any reason, the account will be debited electronically for the amount of the check and/or draft plus a processing fee.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

The Florida statute regulating childcare licensure requires that all children must be signed in and out by an authorized parent or guardian. A parent or authorized person must sign each child in and out daily at the time the child is picked up or dropped off.

Only authorized individuals listed on child's registration form will be allowed to sign out child. Proper identification must accompany the individual at pick-up. It is imperative that your registration form includes all other appropriate individuals who may pick up your child in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Any changes to the pick-up list must be in writing. Only the person signing the registration form is able to make changes.

- Please adhere to the school's posted speed limit when picking up and dropping off
- Smoking is prohibited at all Before and After School locations

## **COURT-ORDERED DOCUMENTS**

Should you have court ordered paperwork for any parties who are not able to have contact with your child enrolled in the YMCA Before and After School program, it is required that the legal custodial parent or guardian provide documentation of any custody and/or guardianship agreement at the time of registration and keep it updated regularly.

The parent or guardian that has signed the registration form is responsible for paying Before and After School fees and is the only one(s) authorized to make changes.

Occasionally we are asked to provide attendance records. Please know that in order to obtain any records from the YMCA, we must be subpoenaed for them. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## **NON-ATTENDANCE and CHANGES IN ATTENDANCE**

We recognize the need for parents to occasionally have their children absent from Before and After School for an entire week. Before and After School allows you two, one-week sessions of non-attendance at no charge with written notice. No partial weeks can be applied to this time off policy.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

If at any time you wish to withdraw your child from the program, a two-week written notice must be given to the program supervisor so that we may adjust your account. **You are responsible for payment through the end of your two-week notice.**

## **HOLIDAY PROGRAMS**

Special programs will be offered at an additional fee for most school-out days and holidays except for: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day and Memorial Day. You will receive reminders regarding these days early enough to plan ahead. Programs are consolidated during school-out days. For school out days and holiday programs, parents are responsible for providing their child with lunch, drinks and snacks. Check with your Site Director or the YMCA about the availability of camps during school closures and holiday closures for your specific site.

## **ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY**

To ensure the health and well-being of all children in our program, if a child has a contagious illness, infection or fever of 100 degrees, vomiting or diarrhea, parents must make arrangements for their child to be picked up from the program immediately. It is necessary for the child to be symptom free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducers, before being allowed to return to the program. If a child has been sent home from school with a communicable disease, the child will not be re-admitted to the site until he or she has been re-admitted to the school or provides a written doctor's release.

A child with chicken pox can return to the program when there are no open sores. Remaining sores should be well scabbed over. Children are usually out for one week. All parents at the site will be notified in writing.

If a child is found to have head lice at the site, the child will be isolated with staff supervision and the parent contacted to pick up the child immediately. The school will be notified that the child has been sent home with head lice, and all parents at the site will be notified in writing. The YMCA will not re-admit children to the program as long as nits are present. A child identified as having head lice shall not be permitted to return until the following day and only provided that treatment has occurred and has been verified by YMCA staff. Verification of treatment may include a product box, box top, or empty bottle.

If your child becomes seriously ill or sustains any injury in our care, all efforts will be made to contact a parent, guardian or emergency contact immediately. As in any severe emergency, 911 will be called.

**Please keep your contact information up to date in case of emergency.**

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medications that need to be administered to a child during Before and After School must be brought in the original prescription bottle or original over the counter packaging with the child's name and instructions for administration clearly printed or labeled. Parents must fill out and sign an "Authorization for Medication Card" required by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Please provide the appropriate measuring tools for proper dosage of the medication.

## **ALLERGIES & SPECIAL DIETARY RESTRICTIONS**

Allergies to foods, chemicals or other environmental issues (such as nuts, pollen, bee stings) must be listed in the "Allergies" section of the child's registration form. Please include any reactions and treatments.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Due to health issues and limited space, lost and found will be cleared out monthly and donated to those in need. Please check the lost and found every day for any belongings your child/children may have misplaced. The YMCA assumes no responsibility for the loss of personal property.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

All emergency procedures including building and facility emergencies, bomb threats, fire emergency, missing persons, life-threatening injury, aquatic emergencies, blood borne pathogen control and hazardous materials control are available at the front desk in the Emergency Procedures Flip Book.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

All staff will be required to wear staff shirts and YMCA nametags. Site staff will provide direct supervision of children. Only staff and children are permitted in program areas. A federally issued picture ID, such as a driver's license or military ID, must be provided to sign a child out of the YMCA's care.

## **DRESS CODE**

Before and After School follows the YMCA Appearance Policy and School Board dress code guidelines. Appropriate clothing and closed-toe shoes are required for outdoor play.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

**Please do not allow your child to bring toys, electronic devices or any other valuable items to Before and After School.** If a child brings personal items, the YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please label all personal belongings with a permanent marker for identification purposes. If an item is missing, you can check the lost and found at the site.

Cell phones are permitted, but must be stored in the child's backpack and must not be a disruption to the program. The YMCA will not be held responsible for lost or damaged phones.

## AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT CURRICULUM

Each YMCA Before and After School site follows a curriculum framework based on sound planning principals the following core developmental content areas.

Component	Outcome	Examples
<b>Arts and Humanities</b>	Demonstrate an appreciation for arts and humanities	Program offers arts activities a minimum of three times per week.
<b>Character Development &amp; Leadership</b>	Demonstrate caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith as well as social skills that help promote leadership.	Staff and activities teach, celebrate, model, reinforce, and practice character development values on a daily basis. Staff confront behaviors that are inconsistent with the values.
<b>Health, Wellness, and Fitness</b>	Demonstrate physical fitness and knowledge about healthy lifestyles	Program offers 30 minutes daily of physical activity, cooperative games, dance, or sports.
<b>Literacy</b>	Develop skills in reading, writing, vocabulary, and comprehension,	Program offers activities a minimum of two times per week.
<b>Homework and Enrichment Centers</b>	Complete homework and demonstrate a commitment to learning.	Program offers a time for homework and enrichment centers offer additional support.
<b>S.T.E.M.</b>	Demonstrate a commitment to learning and problem-solving skills.	Program offers activities a minimum of two times per week.

The specific activities associated with the various curriculum categories generally take place in one or several of the following contexts, each of which is balanced throughout the day or week.

**Free Choice:** The child has the option of choosing from among several activities.

**Small Group:** The activities available can be done either in small groups or alone.

**Project Time:** Time is set-aside for children to begin or return to a long-term project.

**Large Group:** Activities are designed for large group participation.

**Indoor/Outdoor:** All of the contexts and activities above are presented or done in both indoor and outdoor settings.

Please take a few minutes to look at the curriculum calendar that is posted monthly at your child's site. It is our hope that your child enjoys his or her experience at YMCA Before and After School. If you have any questions regarding the curriculum, please do not hesitate to ask your Site Director.

## **Academic Support**

YMCA Before and After School programs provide a strong focus on literacy and mathematics. The new academic support will help children to retain information in a structured environment. Research shows that children who spend time in constructive learning activities after school perform better in the classroom.

Homework time is offered Monday through Thursday for at least 30 minutes per day. While we make every effort to give your child appropriate time and support to complete his/her homework, please realize it is not the responsibility of the staff to be sure it is correct and complete. We encourage parents to follow up on the child's homework.

## **PHYSICAL FITNESS AND WELLNESS**

The YMCA of Florida's First Coast partners with an AmeriCorps Service Member each year to implement initiatives in our youth programs to improve their physical fitness and nutritional education for an improved well-being. Our Before and After Schools programs take part in the Youth Fit for Life Program (YFFL).

YFFL is an approach to ensure children are receiving at least 3 days a week of health, wellness and physical activity in the YMCA. YFFL will have 45 minute, 3 days a week of activities prior or following enrichment or homework assistance. The 4 program components include: Nutrition, Strength, Cardio, and Flexibility. These sessions will center on weekly health topics such as eating nutritious foods, drinking water, practicing good hygiene, exercising to stay active, keeping a positive attitude, and also getting plenty of rest.

The YMCA also provides a variety of activities with the intention of reducing the amount of time any child spends in front of a TV. The YMCA adheres to the healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) standards and practices limited screen time.

## **Nutrition and Snacks**

Nutrition is discussed weekly, emphasizing healthy choices.

USDA approved healthy snacks and 100% juice or water are provided daily\*. A monthly snack menu will be posted at your child's site. **If a child has special dietary needs, it is the parent's responsibility to provide an alternate healthy snack. This MUST be noted on the Registration Form.**

\*varies by site

## **POSITIVE REDIRECTION & DISCIPLINE**

YMCA staffers wish to work with your child and for you to have the best experience possible. It is important that staff maintain good order and discipline in all programs. Top objectives in all YMCA programs are safety and a positive atmosphere for learning and developing social skills. The YMCA makes every effort to help children understand clear definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

### **The YMCA does not condone and will not permit:**

1. Corporal punishment
2. Ridiculing, threatening, using an inappropriate loud voice
3. Leaving children unsupervised
4. Use of profanity

### **A child's behavior is expected to be consistent with the following:**

1. Use appropriate language at all times.
2. Cooperate with staff and follow directions.
3. Respect other children and staff, equipment and facilities, and yourself.
4. Maintain a positive attitude.
5. Aggressive behavior and hitting is not allowed.
6. Stay in program areas – running away is not acceptable.

## **Discipline Policy**

1. If a participant is unable to comply with the behavior expectations, the child will be given an initial warning and his or her parents/guardians will be notified.
2. If a participant's behavior continues to be disruptive, he or she will receive a written reprimand and parents will be notified and consulted concerning the participant's behavior.
3. The YMCA reserves the right to suspend or expel a child from the program if his or her behavior places other participants or staff in immediate harm and/or if his or her behavior places him or herself in immediate harm.
4. Expulsion from the program is for one calendar year and includes other YMCA programs. There will be no refund of program fees. A child who has been expelled from the program may request to be allowed back into the program after a short assessment period of 90 days

The YMCA reserves the right to suspend or expel any child from the program who poses serious or continual behavior problems with no fee reimbursement. Infractions deemed "serious" may result in immediate suspension and/or expulsion regardless of previous disciplinary action.

## **Behaviors which may result in immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:**

1. Any action that could threaten or pose a direct threat to the physical/emotional safety of the child, other children or staff
2. Fighting or hitting
3. Possession of a weapon of any kind
4. Vandalism or destruction of YMCA property or property of others
5. Sexual misconduct
6. Possession of or use of alcohol or controlled substances unless under the prescription of a doctor
7. Running away
8. Biting

## **Special Circumstances**

Parents or guardians are required to inform the YMCA in writing, prior to a child's acceptance in a YMCA program, of any special circumstances which may affect the child's ability to participate fully and within the guidelines of acceptable behavior, including but not limited to any serious behavioral problems or special circumstances regarding psychological, medical or physical conditions.

Upon being informed of such circumstances, the Site Director may require a conference with the parent(s)/guardian to discuss issues created by these circumstances.

I understand and acknowledge that: (i) it is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian to make full disclosure to the YMCA of any special circumstances which may affect the ability of my child/ward to participate, as described above; (ii) it is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian to inform the YMCA of any requested accommodation believed by the parent(s)/guardian to be necessary and readily achievable for such participation; and (iii) full disclosure of any special circumstances is material to the YMCA's evaluation of the child's/ward's ability to participate and the YMCA's consideration of any requested accommodation.



## **INVESTIGATING AN ISSUE OR CONCERN**

You may occasionally have an issue or concern you wish to bring to our attention. We welcome your thoughts and comments. In the event you have reported an issue at the site, please be assured that we will complete a thorough investigation which includes speaking to any pertinent staff and sometimes the children. So that you can be aware of our process, listed below are the procedures we follow when dealing with parental concerns:

- Speak to the parent/guardian to get all the information regarding the concern. We are unable to speak with anyone other than the parent/guardian (this includes grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc.).
- If necessary, we will bring our Human Resources Representative in to work with us.
- Once we have gathered all the pertinent information, we will follow the YMCA of Florida's First Coast Policies and Procedures. Depending on the circumstances, disciplinary action may be required. Due to confidentiality, we are unable to discuss any details – regardless if it involves another Before and After School participant or a staff member.
- There is no time limit with an investigation. We will take as much time as necessary to thoroughly investigate all issues.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

In order to ensure the wellbeing of all children in our care, our staff has a continuing duty under state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, to the Department of Children and Families and to cooperate in any investigation of such possible neglect or abuse. All staff members are mandatory reporters and must follow Florida statute for mandatory reporting. We may be subjected to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm. Staff is not allowed to comment to parents, other staff or any other persons on the subject of reported child abuse. Parents may not accuse or question staff concerning child abuse allegations. Child abuse investigations are a matter for DCF or local police departments.

## **BABYSITTING POLICY**

The YMCA strives to employ the very best staff possible in all of our programs. After they are no longer employed with us, these persons are private citizens and no longer subject to our employment rules and procedures. The YMCA cannot and does not endorse or recommend its former staff members as babysitters to any parent or guardian of any child in any of our programs. Any babysitting arrangements with former staff of the YMCA are separate and independent from any YMCA program and must be based on the independent investigation, responsibility and judgment of the parent or guardian. Current YMCA staff are prohibited from babysitting while under employment of the Y.

The YMCA shall not be responsible and will be held harmless from any claims or liability in connection with such babysitting activities.

## **GIVE TO THE Y CAMPAIGN**

Your support of the Give to the Y Campaign provides the funds that allow us to offer scholarships to those less fortunate. All contributions remain in our local community, giving children and families a chance to grow stronger in spirit, mind and body at the YMCA. While the need is great, the generosity of people like you can make the difference.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the Give to the Y Campaign and make a difference by giving your gift today.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for taking the time to review the information presented in this handbook regarding our YMCA Before and After School program. We sincerely hope that you and your child have an incredible Before and After School experience this school year. If at any time you feel as if the program is not meeting your expectations, please do not hesitate to contact the YMCA so we can work together to address your concerns.

## **STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY**