

YMCA School Age Programming: Parent/Family Handbook

Dear Parents/Families:

Welcome to the YMCA of Greater Boston's Out-of-School (OST) or School Age Program. We are delighted that you have chosen us. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing experience for your child with plenty of opportunities for growth in spirit, mind, and body.

Children spend a considerable amount of time in our program, during which time a significant developmental impact occurs. In all settings attitudes are formed, ideas of self worth are developed, and relationships with peers and adults are built. Our School Age Programs are designed to provide each child with a variety of positive, healthy, inclusive, and interesting activities throughout each week. The staff is trained and experienced in working with children. Many of our staff have or are working toward degrees in education or in the human service field. The YMCA provides its staff with ongoing professional development throughout the year to enhance their skills in nurturing your child and in promoting social responsibility, positive youth development, and healthy living.

This handbook is designed to share the philosophy, goals, policies, and procedures of our Out-of-School Time Programs. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk with us. We are very much interested in your comments, questions, and feedback regarding our program.

Thank you for choosing the YMCA to meet your child's needs. You have chosen a quality program for your child, with safety as our number one priority. Together we can ensure a successful experience for your child. Welcome to our YMCA family.

The YMCA Department of Early Childhood and Youth Resources

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the YMCA of Greater Boston's Out-of-School Time Program (OST) is to provide quality care in a safe and supportive environment that fosters the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth of children, while supporting and strengthening families.

YMCA OST programs provide quality care for children at the YMCA and satellite program sites.

Licensing Agency

All YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and are mandated to uphold all of the Department of Early Education and Care rules and regulations pertaining to Out-of-School Time licensing.

Philosophy

The YMCA of Greater Boston is dedicated to developing spirit, mind, and body through programs which strengthen families, develop leadership in youth, encourage social responsibility, promote healthy lifestyles, build international understanding, and assist in community development.

Activities/Programs

YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs offer children a variety of age appropriate multi-culturally enriched and diverse activities, which include homework assistance, arts and crafts, sports and games, cooking, music, dance, science, environmental education, swimming, fitness, clubs, field trips and special events. Our programs are dedicated to providing learning in afterschool through innovative and interactive activities.

Non-Discrimination Policy

YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs admit children of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to all children and families at the YMCA. The YMCA does not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, athletics, and other child care administered projects. Based on Christian principals, the YMCA's policies are to provide membership opportunities to all people regardless of religion, race, gender, marital status, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, sexual orientation, or ability to pay. Toilet training is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Goals and Objectives

The YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs are designed to provide recreation, social, and educational activities that stimulate growth and provide the security of a homelike setting. OST programs provide a variety of positive, fun, healthy, and interesting activities, which promote a child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being. Our programs focus on helping children ages K-14 develop to their fullest potential.

Our goals and objectives are:

- To provide quality care and enrichment for children regardless of social and economic background
- To support and strengthen the family unit
- To help children develop to the fullest potential
- To deliver the program in a positive YMCA environment that includes safety, support, and care

Staff

The success of our programs (and ultimately your child(ren)'s positive experience) lies in the quality of our staff. Our staff members are carefully selected based on their experience, education, talents, and interpersonal skills. Our staff comes together for an in-depth orientation training to cover such areas as program goals, emergency procedures, group work, curriculum planning, philosophy, goals and objectives, and policy and procedures. Our educators bring with them a multitude of experiences and backgrounds. Above all else our staff has one thing in common – a love for working with children.

A criminal background check (CORI / SORI checks) is performed for all staff members, and every staff engages in First Aid, CPR, and Child Safety and Protection training.

Staff Development

The YMCA provides its staff with many opportunities for professional development and advancement through staff training. The Program Director informs the teachers of all training made available to the YMCA School Age staff. The group leaders are required to complete a significant number of hours of training per year.

The Program Director also contacts speakers to come to the YMCA to speak to the staff on topics such as child protection, inclusion and working with diverse learners, positive child guidance, and other pertinent issues.

In addition, the Program Director provides opportunities for educators to visit other centers in the community and within the YMCA. These visits provide the educators with the experience of observing different teaching styles and sharing program ideas.

The YMCA also encourages volunteers to work in its OST programs. The volunteers receive appropriate orientation, training, supervision and staff development. They are chosen for their ability to meet the needs of the children. They must meet the same requirements as the staff in regard to CORI/SORI checks, three documented references, and an orientation to the program. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in trainings that are offered to the staff.

For a volunteer who is a parent of a child enrolled in the YMCA's OST program, the CORI/SORI and reference check is not applicable as long as the parent is not included in the required staff/child ratio or has unmonitored contact with children.

The YMCA will describe, in writing, any arrangements they may have with any school or professional training program, which will include an overview of student responsibilities as well as an explanation of the supervision of students by the training program and the YMCA.

Enrollment

Registration is first offered to the existing OST participants, then to the established waiting list, and then to the general public. The enrollment capacity of each program site is dictated by the Department of Early Education and Care. Individual registration procedures are done throughout the year by appointment, and include a meeting with the Director/Coordinator, a tour of the facility, and a parent and child orientation.

Registration papers include a dated and signed Parent and Physician Health Form, Developmental History, Pick-Up Authorization, Field Trip Permission Slip, Basic Registration, and Emergency Information and Consent Forms. In addition, the program's Parent Handbook must be read and a receipt slip signed and returned to the branch verifying that parents understand and adhere to the policies and procedures set forth by the OST program.

Vacations

The YMCA of Greater Boston allows families two vacation weeks per year. Vacations can be taken after the child has been enrolled in the program for 90 days. A school year runs September through August. Vacations may be taken in weeks only, not one day at a time. Please provide the center with a two week advance written notice of your vacation request. Policies around timing of vacation usage may vary from one location to another and will be discussed at enrollment.

Strategies to Help Prevent Child Abuse

These preventative strategies are designed to protect the children in YMCA programs and to protect YMCA staff and volunteers from being wrongly accused of incidences of child abuse.

1. The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff not suited for working with children.
2. The YMCA will take seriously any allegation or suspicion of child abuse.
3. Staff members understand their legal obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect.
4. Policies, procedures, and training are available related to child guidance, supervision, staff/participant interaction, staff and volunteer Code of Conduct, etc.
5. Staff understands what practices may be considered abusive and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch.
6. Defensive strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations.
7. Staff communicates frequently with parents regarding day-to-day activities and encourages parents to report or question any behavior or event their child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
8. Parents know that they can visit, unannounced, any program their child participates in - and are encouraged to do so.
9. Staff tries to identify stressed parents and offers support and referrals for help.
10. Staff has learned how to discuss sensitive issues with children such as toileting, sleeping, and questions about sex.
11. Staff protects themselves and the YMCA by agreeing not to be alone with YMCA youth or program participants outside of YMCA programs or facilities (i.e.

babysit, take children on trips, have them in their homes when others are not present, etc.)

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Cases

In order to ensure the well-being of the 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 (DCF), and to cooperate in any investigation of such possible neglect or abuse. (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A)

We do not have discretion in this matter. We must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including non-family members. We may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm. Moreover, in grievous cases, we may refer the matter directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney as well.

YMCA of Greater Boston Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The YMCA advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding restroom privileges, confining children in small locked rooms, or verbal or emotional abuse.

Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings are important factors in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, YMCA staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e. not everyone wants to be hugged). The YMCA encourages appropriate touch. At the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children. High-fives, pats on the back, and side hugs are among appropriate methods of touch.

As a YMCA OST Program, we are mandated by Massachusetts State Law to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If a case of child abuse or neglect is suspected by a staff member or in the care of a staff member, the following procedures are in place;

In the event that there is an accusation or suspicion of child abuse, the YMCA will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. When there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred, the individual will notify the Program Director, who will then review the incident with the YMCA Executive Director, or his/her designee. If the Program Director is not immediately available, the individual should report to the Executive Director or senior staff member. This review by the supervisor cannot in any way deter the reporting of child abuse by the mandated reporter.
2. The person receiving the initial report will be responsible for assessing the data collected and the condition of the child.
3. Data concerning the child will be obtained within the Branch location or Program through discussion with the initial reporter and other staff.
4. After the information is secured, the Executive or Director will call the Department of Children and Families' Protective Service Unit to make a report.

- Within 48 hours the Executive or Director will file a written 51A with the Department of Children and Families' Protective Services Unit. If a YMCA staff or volunteer has been named in the 51A report, the Department of Early Education and Care, Department of Public Health, or other appropriate regulatory agency will also be notified.
5. On the same day that the case is first reported verbally to the Department of Children and Families, it must be reported to the Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of Greater Boston and the Executive Director of the Early Childhood and Youth Resources Department. A copy of the written report will be sent to the YMCA Operation's Department.
 6. Any staff or volunteer named in a 51A report will, without exception, be removed from direct care responsibilities until the Department of Children and Families and/or the Department of Early Education and Care or Department of Public Health have completed their investigations. A positive finding dictates immediate termination.
 7. In the case of disagreement (or uncertainty) concerning the need to report, the Executive or Director may not substitute his/her judgment for any mandated report within the Branch or Program. While agreement of all professionals involved is desirable, the Branch Executive or Director must report to the Department of Social Services.
 8. The parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions set forth by the relevant state or local agency.
 9. Whether the incident or alleged offense took place on or off YMCA premises, it will be considered job related (because of the youth-involved nature of the YMCA)
 10. Reinstatement of an accused program volunteer or employed staff person will occur only after allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the persons named in #1.
 11. All YMCA staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information, and therefore, should only discuss the incident with the persons named in #1. All reports must be kept in a locked file.

Health and Safety Policy

The focus of the YMCA of Greater Boston School Age Program is not limited to learning, but also encompasses the physical and emotional aspects of your child's development. We ask for your cooperation in accepting the rules we have made for the health and safety of each child, and in turn we pledge to you our diligence in maintaining good practices. If at times you are inconvenienced, we ask you to remember that in protecting someone else's child, we will also help maintain a safe environment for your own. Health Care Policies can be found at the program site. The program Health Care Policy is available upon request.

Toys from Home

Educators discourage any toys/valuables from home being brought to the program. They can be a source of distraction and disruption. The children's days are very

productive, and there are many items for learning and play for the children's use on a daily basis. In addition, the YMCA is not responsible for lost or broken toys/items that come from home.

Sickness

Please keep your child at home if he/she seems listless, unusually irritable, complains of ache, is feverish, or seems to be unusually pale or flushed. It is better to be over-cautious than to risk exposing the rest of the children and staff, as well as posing more discomfort for a sick child. The following is a guideline for you to follow in determining when to keep your child at home.

Child should be kept home for:

- Earache
- Fever over 100 degrees
- Sore throat
- Stomach ache
- Contagious condition, i.e. chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc.
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Contagious rash
- Head lice, including visible nits

Child may come with:

- Low grade fever due to teething
- Earaches, strep throat, conjunctivitis (provided they have been on medication for 24 hours)
- Colds (provided they have been fever free for 24 hours)
- Hay fever
- Non-contagious condition

Each child responds and reacts differently to illness. Please be advised that the group leaders and/or Directors may need to send a child home. If the child is unable to keep up with the pace of the day due to illness, parents are expected to make arrangement for pick-up in a timely fashion. Also, infants with diarrhea may not be in day care due to risk of dehydration. If your child is at the center and becomes ill, you will be required to pick up your child immediately. Please be aware that these guidelines are set forth to help maintain the health and safety of your child and other children as well.

Please notify the YMCA Program immediately if your child is exposed to a contagious condition. The Director/Coordinator will notify you if and when it is necessary to keep your child at home. All parents will be given notice if a child in the program has been reported to have a contagious illness. Notices will include information on symptoms and general information on the contagion.

Administration of Medication

Any medication administered to a child must have prior written parent authorization. Prescription medication will only be administered on the written order of the child's physician, and must be in the original container with the child's name, name of the drug and directions for its administration and storage on the label. Inhalers for children

with asthma may be used as needed, without direct supervision of staff, and carried by the child if written consent is given by the parent and the child's physician.

The YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs will keep a written record of the administration of any medication, which includes the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the name of the staff member administering the medication and the name of the child. The Y will store all medications under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security, and safety. All unused medication will be returned to the parent. Prior to a non-prescription medication being dispensed, the parent will be notified. The type of medication and dosage will be recorded, put in the child's file, and a written copy will be given to the parent.

Lead Screening

Lead poisoning is an environmental disease which can affect preschool children. Small amounts of lead can affect a child's ability to learn and develop. Larger amounts, if not detected and treated in time, may cause serious illness or permanent damage.

Most often children are poisoned by the ingestion of lead paint child or inhalation of lead paint dust. However, there are many possible sources of lead available to children living in an industrial society. We are only the beginning to understand how soil, air, and water contribute to the lead levels of children. Children are exposed to these sources through normal hand to mouth activity.

Most children who have lead poisoning will not show any symptoms. In those who do show symptoms, they are often vague and easily attributed to other childhood diseases. The early symptoms of lead poisoning include headache or stomachache, tiredness, fussiness, and poor appetite. The only sure way of determining whether a child has absorbed too much lead is to test his/her blood. The lead screening test is a simple, relatively painless finger stick which collects a small amount of blood. The blood is analyzed for two substances. The first test performed is erythrocyte protoporphyrin, or EP. EP is very sensitive to lead and rises quickly after a child has been exposed. EP is also a measurement of the amount of iron available to the child, and in some cases the EP is elevated because the child is iron deficient. If the EP is normal, the specimen is usually not tested for lead, but if the EP is elevated, a lead test will be performed. If an elevated blood lead level is found, then the child will be referred to their health care provider for a follow-up.

All children under six and living in Massachusetts are at risk for acquiring lead poisoning. However, for some children, particularly those living in housing with peeling paint, the risk is greater. Therefore, the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program recommends that all children be tested at the age of nine months and annually until they turn four. Because, for reasons not well explained, lead levels rise in the summer; whenever possible a screening test should be performed during the warm weather months. Most doctors and clinics will screen children for lead if you request it. Many Boards of Health also provide screen tests, usually at no cost.

Allergies

Any allergies to foods, medicines, or other materials should be listed in the "Allergies" section of the child's information form. This information will be placed on a master list and posted in food preparation and distribution areas, the Director's office, and

First Aid area. All staff will be informed of children's allergies and instructed to avoid these products.

If a child in the center/group has a severe allergy to peanut products the center may have to impose a "peanut product-free zone."

Bathroom Procedures

Children may go to the bathroom as needed. Educators will provide opportunities throughout the day for the child to go to the restroom. Children using the toilet will follow EEC guidelines for hand washing, and will use disposable towels to dry their hands. The teachers will always discuss the procedures with the parents and follow their requests.

If a child should have a toileting accident and soils his/her clothes, a group leader escorts the child to the bathroom where the child cleans up, with assistance as needed. The soiled clothes are put into a plastic bag labeled with the child's name. The bag of soiled clothes will be given to the parent upon pick-up. It is recommended that parents provide the program with a clean set of seasonally appropriate clothes.

Infection Control

The program shall ensure that the specified equipment, items or surfaces (including floors and walls) are washed with soap and water and disinfected as needed to maintain a sanitary environment.

The following items are monitored for cleanliness and washed and disinfected at least daily:

- Toilets and toilet seats
- Sinks and sink faucets
- Drinking fountains
- Water table and water play equipment
- Play tables
- Smooth surfaced non-porous floors
- Mops used for cleaning
- Wash cloths and towels

Disinfectant Solution

Disinfectant solution is either a self-made bleach solution or a commercially prepared disinfectant that has been registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a sanitizing solution. (Registration can be identified by reading the product label and using the disinfectant precisely as directed on the label.) The household bleach used to prepare a self-made bleach solution has 5.25% available chlorine as hypochlorite. A self-made bleach solution is sealed with a cap, and the solution is prepared daily or tested daily in accordance with the Department of Public Health's guidelines. All such disinfectants are stored in a secure place and out of the reach of children.

Emergency Procedures

Children experiencing minor injuries or illness such as bumps, bruises, scrapes, bee stings and stomach upsets will be treated by staff, who has received First Aid training, taking note of specifications on the child's health form. Children may need to be isolated from other children and have their condition monitored. Parents will be informed, in

writing at the time of pickup or within 24 hours, of any First Aid given to their child. If their child's symptoms persist, parents will be asked to pick up their child.

In the case of a major emergency such as broken bones, puncture wounds, etc.; the child will be taken by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical facility. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital. Emergency forms on file will include child and parent information, emergency number when parent cannot be reached, and a medical release to seek treatment if parents cannot be reached. Parents will receive written documentation of all serious injuries/accidents within 24 hours of their occurrence.

Transportation Plan

Transportation will only be provided to and/or from schools or other sites where a minimum of three children are transported, unless the school or site with less than three children is within two miles of the normal bus route. If your child misses the YMCA transportation vehicle, he/she returns to the school's main office and calls the YMCA. A vehicle will return to the school and pick up your child as soon as possible. The YMCA is on a tight transportation schedule and advises parents to remind their children to be on time for daily pickup.

YMCA of Greater Boston's OST participants are transported to the program from school to the YMCA by vans, busses, public transportation, alternative transportation provided by the school system, staff escorts by foot, and parents that drive their children to the YMCA site. Individual modes of arrival and responsibility for children may vary at different sites. Parents may refer to the Family Handbook insert for specifics related to their site/location.

In order for children to sign themselves out and walk home from the program, they must be age nine and older, and deemed by both program leadership and parent/guardian as responsible to do so. A child may leave the premises with written parent and educator consent, provided the consent specifies the day & time your child will leave, the time your child will return (if applicable), the method of transportation your child will use, and confirmation of your responsibility for your child once they leave the program. Any incidents of concern or issues regarding safety may be cause to re-visit this agreement and rescind any extended privileges.

Emergency Transportation Plan

YMCA of Greater Boston OST emergency procedures are as follows:
A child that is seriously injured at the YMCA will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Parents or guardians will be immediately notified of the child's injury. If parents or guardians cannot be contacted, the emergency contact list will be called. A staff member will accompany the child with emergency forms, to the nearest medical facility to await the child's parent, guardian or emergency contact person.

If a child is injured during a field trip, an OST staff member certified in First Aid will assess the injury and instruct a fellow staff member to obtain the child's emergency contact numbers from the vehicle and phone an ambulance, parent, or guardian, or emergency contact person, and the YMCA's administrative staff. The child will then be transported by ambulance to the nearest medical facility accompanied by a staff member who has the child's emergency forms. The staff member will stay with the child until the child's parent, guardian, or emergency contact person arrives at the medical facility. Parents will receive written documentation of all serious injuries and accidents within 24 hours of the injury.

Field Trip Transportation Plan

Children participating in field trips from our OST programs will be transported in YMCA vehicles, public transportation, rented vehicles or transported by walking. The YMCA of Greater Boston is responsible for your child during transportation on field trips. In the event a vehicle should break down, alternative transportation will be secured at the branch with YMCA vehicles, rental vehicles and public transportation. All groups visiting an off-site facility are responsible for travel First Aid and emergency procedures. At least one person on the trip is certified in First Aid and CPR.

Any activity location not on the common use list will mandate advanced written parental consent outlining the date of the trip, destination, duration, and mode of transportation. On field trips, each child carries on his/her person the name, address, and telephone number related to the particular YMCA site. Each location will determine its own policy outlining how this procedure will be facilitated (ie. bracelets, stickers, etc.)

Holidays

YMCA of Greater Boston School Age Programs will not be open on the following days:

Labor Day: September
Day after Labor Day: September (Staff training day)
Columbus Day: October
Thanksgiving Day: November
Day after Thanksgiving: November
Christmas Eve: December (early closing)
Christmas Day: December
New Years Eve: December (early closing)
New Years Day: January
Martin Luther King Day: January
Presidents' Day: February
Patriots Day: April
Memorial Day: May
Staff Camp Training: June
Independence Day: July

School Vacation Weeks

Participants in the YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs may choose to participate in vacation programs. Program hours are from 7:30/8:00 am to 6:00 pm during December, February, April, and June vacation weeks. A notice detailing registration, fees, and an activity schedule is distributed. Lunches are provided by the parent unless otherwise noted.

Inclement Weather Policy

The YMCA of Greater Boston observes the following policies when school is canceled or closes early because of inclement weather. When school is closed before the start of the school day, OST is open 7:30/8:00 am to 6:00 pm. If no children arrive by 11:00 am, the center will close. When early dismissal from school is called unexpectedly, children in the

OST program will be transported to the YMCA OST site. Every attempt will be made to pick up your child as close to the announced dismissal time as possible. School Age Programs are open, provided the branch location is open. In extremely harsh conditions, the Branch Executive, with the approval of the Chief Operating Officer for Operations, may decide to close the branch.

Decisions regarding delayed openings or early closings are also made by the Branch Executive. Closings and delayed openings or early closings are announced on local TV and Radio Stations. Parents will also be contacted with as much notice as possible if the YMCA is unable to transport a child because of extremely dangerous driving conditions. When school is cancelled for full day due to snow, the YMCA does not provide transportation.

Parent Visits and Conferences

In order to ensure a quality OST program, we need your help. The YMCA encourages parents to visit at any time. Conferences may also be arranged by appointment. Open and friendly communication is essential. Parent participation and input is welcome. In order to keep parent communication open, please make sure you check your parent mailboxes daily. For those children who are transported by the YMCA vehicle, materials will be sent home with your child(ren). The children, staff and director/coordinator appreciate your creativity, ideas, and leadership in activities.

Parents' concerns or suggestions for our school age program can be immediately directed to the Director/Coordinator. Details surrounding the parent's concern or complaint will be reviewed; solutions will be discussed; and an action plan will be implemented. Feel free to discuss any concerns or suggestions that you may have with the staff and/or the Director/Coordinator.

Child Guidance

Basic rules include respect for each other, the property of others, the YMCA facility, the child's safety, and the security of the group. Child guidance is accomplished through a positive approach, which respects the child as an individual. Discipline procedures are handled individually. YMCA educators provide guidance to children in a positive, consistent, and age appropriate way, based on an understanding of the individual needs and developmental stage of the child. The following are some examples of strategies in child guidance:

- Helping children learn social, communication, and emotional regulation skills they can use in place of challenging behaviors.
- Using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent challenging behaviors.
- Intervening quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and helping them develop more positive strategies for resolving conflict;
- Explaining rules and procedures and the reasons for them to children, and where appropriate and feasible, allowing children to participate in the establishment of program rules, policies and procedures.

Progressive Methods of Child Guidance Approved for YMCA Child Care Staff

Redirection

Reminder of rules

Allowance for transition times and notice before they occur

Discuss about challenges for a child. (The child is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing them.)

Cool down time: a quiet time for a child in a designated place (within view and near the staff):

Withdraw a child from activity

Ask the child to sit apart from the group

After 1 minute ask the child the reason why he/she is apart from the group and ask if he/she is ready to return to the activity

Discuss situation with the child's parent

Incorporate his/her suggestions into the child's behavior guidance plan

Restricted Methods of Child Guidance

No spanking or other corporal punishment

No cruel, unusual, or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, abusive treatment

No denial of meals or snacks, drink, rest, or bathroom facilities as punishment

No force feeding

No punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting

No punishment related to eating or not eating food

No excessive time-outs; time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view

No deprivation of outdoor time

A educator may only supportively hold a child in rare cases of an emergency where a dangerous threat to a child exists. The group leader may only hold the child long enough to remove him/her from the dangerous situation and when appropriate, return him/her to the group.

Supportive holding of children is considered only in the following situations:

- The child's safety is at risk
- The safety of other children or adults is at risk
- The child must be moved in order to be safely supervised
- The child demonstrates a sustained behavior that is highly disruptive and/or upsetting to other children necessitating moving the child

Supportive hold is not implemented unless:

- The safety of the child and others demands immediate intervention

- All other possible interventions have been attempted prior to supportive holding
- The supportive hold may only be sustained long enough to remove a child from an unsafe environment or keep him/her from hurting self or others

Any YMCA staff who violates any of the above restricted methods may be immediately suspended until further investigation is completed by Department of Children and Families and Department of Early Education and Care.

Children's Responsibilities

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to take consequences for their own actions.
- Displaying character development traits: caring, respect, honesty and responsibility
- Respecting the rules that are established for and by them.
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone.
- Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program.
- Remaining with a staff member at all times and notifying staff if they need to go to another area.
- Being on time with belongings for pickup at the end of the school day.
- Dressing appropriately for indoor and outdoor play.
- Returning materials and equipment to the correct place, and before starting a new activity or going home.
- Participating in and carrying out an activity to which the child made a commitment.
- Wearing properly fastened seat belts while on the YMCA vehicles.
- Behaving in a manner, while in the YMCA vehicle, which allows maximum concentration of the driver (children who do not behave accordingly on the YMCA vehicles will be suspended from the transportation privilege).

Children's Rights

Staff are responsible for ensuring that children enrolled:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards.
- Have use of all the equipment and space on an equal basis and are able to find equipment in functioning condition.
- Have their ideas and feelings respected.
- Have guidance that is fair, equal and respectful of them.
- Have opportunity to express their anger, frustration, disappointment, joy, etc., in an appropriate manner.
- Have activities that allow participants to express their creative ability, as they explore and discover, while developing to their fullest potential.
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: physical, gross motor, quiet, indoor, outdoor, active and passive areas, creative, dramatic play, and exploring.
- Have a right to voice their opinion on the rules and have input on activities offered.

- Have staff members that care about them, enjoy being with them, and help them grow.
- Are treated with caring, respect, honesty and responsibility.

Anti-bullying Policy

The YMCA of Greater Boston is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for children in our care, so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. *Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our early education and out-of-school time programs.* That is, any use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person (including, but not limited to, physical, emotional, verbal, sexual) is not tolerated. The YMCA encourages a culture of “telling” in its programs. Staff members are trained to recognize and respond in all circumstances and effectively deal with issues of bullying, both on behalf of the individual being bullied and in relation to working with a “bully.” Serious incidents of targeted aggression are documented, and ongoing monitoring of the situation will occur.

When attempts to change unacceptable behavior are unsuccessful, consequences of repeated bullying may include suspension and/or termination. Optimally, bullying will be prevented by educating children, families, and staff through discussion, literature, stories, rules, and by role modeling caring and respectful relationships. The YMCA child guidance policies explore in depth strategies and procedures when working with children’s behavior, particularly in relation to the age of a child, specific learning abilities, and exploring avenues for success. Both policies will be considered, as applicable, when determining how best to serve the children in our care.

Progress Reports

School Age staff members prepare written progress reports for each child twice per year and quarterly for children with special needs.

Special Accommodations for a Child

The YMCA of Greater Boston will request and review information given by a parent related to a child’s participation in the program. Identification of specific accommodations required to meet the needs of the child, which would include change or modification in the child’s participation in regular activities can be reviewed. In addition, identification of any special equipment, materials, ramps or aids will be discussed. It is the goal of the YMCA to serve every child, however, if such accommodations will cause undue burden on the program, the parent(s) will be notified in writing regarding inability to serve a child, and the reasons for this decision. Parents may contact the Department of Early Education and Care to review any such decision.

Referral Services

Through the YMCA of Greater Boston’s connections with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care, we have information regarding social, mental health, educational and medical services including, but not limited to dental check-up, hearing, or vision screening for families. Inquiries about these referral services are made through the Program Director. If staff has a concern about a child, the behaviors are observed, recorded, and reviewed before a referral is recommended. A parent meeting is set up to discuss the program’s concerns and referral options.

The program has a current list of agencies in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services. The list includes the contact person for Chapter 766 and Early Intervention Programs. The program provides parents with a written statement including the reason for recommending referral for additional services, a brief summary of the program's observations, and any efforts the program may have made to accommodate the child's needs. The program may offer assistance to the parents in making the referral and needs written parental consent before any referral is made. The program maintains a written record of any referrals, including the conferences with parents and any results or actions discussed.

(Avoidance of) Termination and Suspension

Parent(s) must inform the YMCA of Greater Boston's Early Education Programs two weeks in advance if they are withdrawing their child from the program. Parents who fail to do so will still be liable for payment. The YMCA of Greater Boston reserves the right to terminate services with a two week advance notice to families. When the health, welfare, and/or safety of other children or staff are at stake, the YMCA reserves the right to suspend or terminate program services immediately.

Possible reasons for suspension and/or termination of a child from the program include:

- Inappropriate behavior, considered to be harmful to your child, staff or others (Parents are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior)
- Inappropriate parent behavior toward a child, staff, or other parent(s)
- Chronic tardiness at pick up time
- Chronic absenteeism
- Overdue fees
- Other, as determined and discussed with the Director

When considering participant suspension or termination from a YMCA Program, and in order to avoid such action, staff members will first utilize all appropriate methods of child guidance and/or progressive methods of discipline as outlined in this handbook. The Program Director will recommend additional supportive services or make a referral for services when deemed necessary, which may include consultation, educator training, evaluation, etc. All incidents and subsequent actions will be documented. If a child is suspended or terminated after exhausting appropriate avenues for sustaining enrollment, the program will provide the parent or guardian with the specific circumstances in which the child may return, if any. Warnings and suspensions are used before termination is instituted. If any referrals are recommended or requested by the parent, the information will be documented in the child's file.

In all cases, suspension and/or expulsion of a child from the OST Program is the final decision of the Program Director in conjunction with Branch leadership. Although a last resort, suspension/termination may be necessary to ensure the safety of a specific child and of others in the group.

When a child is terminated from the program, the staff shall prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with his/her ability to understand. Suspension will not

be for punishment or to circumvent referral requirements and will not be in violation of the ADA.

Nutritious Snack or Lunch

YMCA of Greater Boston's Early Education Programs work with parents to help ensure that the children's nutritional needs are being met in accordance with USDA requirements. The YMCA will ensure that nutritious snacks and meals are provided for children. In addition, the YMCA will follow parental or physician's orders in relation to special diets.

**If a child in the center/group has a severe allergy to peanut products the center may impose a "no peanut rule".*

The YMCA will ensure that one nutritious snack is provided for children who are in our care for more than two hours but less than four. One meal and one snack, or two snacks, are provided for children in our care for four to seven hours (meal provided by parent for most programs).

Attendance

YMCA of Greater Boston OST programs request that if a child is to be absent from the program, the parent must call the child's program site at least two hours prior to the child's usual scheduled arrival at the program. The parent will be contacted in the event that the child does not arrive at the YMCA and previous notice has not been given. If your child is absent on his/her scheduled day, the parent is still responsible for payment for program services.

Pick-Up Authorization

A Pick-Up Authorization Form must be completed by the parent prior to the child's enrollment at the OST program. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than an authorized person, the center must be notified in writing. Parents or designated persons picking up children must come in the building and sign out the child. For your child's safety, we will not allow your child to leave the site without an authorized person. Please ensure that authorized pick-up persons have picture identification, available when unfamiliar faces are picking up. All persons authorized to pick-up must be 16 years of age. Please be aware if the staff has concerns that an authorized release person, including a parent, is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the staff may require that another authorized release person be contacted to pick up a child. Repeated incidents of this circumstance may be cause for intervention from a support agency, such as the Department of Children and Families.

Late Pick-Up Policy

All employees' scheduled hours revolve around the program's closing time. On certain occasions, when a parent must be late, the YMCA has established these firm policies:

- Parents must call the YMCA to let us know what time they will expect to arrive.
- Parents will be assessed a \$1.00 per minute/per child late fee when they are late past closing time. The clock at the child care site will be used to determine the fee charged. A late fee charge will be added to the parent's bill.

- In the event of consistent tardiness, a case conference will be convened to discuss possible alternatives for pick up.

In the event that the YMCA does not receive a prior phone call from the parent, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:

- A YMCA staff member will contact parents for instructions. If contact cannot be made, a YMCA staff member will call the emergency contact list to arrange pick-up. (Parents will be charged \$1.00 per child each minute the emergency contact person is late)
- If by 2 hours after closing, contact cannot be made to the child's parents or emergency contact people, a call will be placed to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Emergency Unit. Staff members will then follow instructions given by DCF to determine what further arrangements are necessary.
- Parents will be informed to contact DCF for further instructions.

Clothing

Children at the YMCA are active and involved. They should wear clothes that are seasonally appropriate, comfortable, and practical. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name. The YMCA of Greater Boston is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

Registration Changes

Any changes in registration information concerning you or your child(ren) should be updated in a timely manner with the program director (i.e., changes in pick-up authorization, addresses, work or home phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.). If you are changing your child's scheduled days you must give two weeks notice. Changes can be accommodated if space allows. All enrollment forms need to be completed/reviewed yearly.

Financial Information

- Rates are charged weekly and are not reduced for any weeks containing scheduled holidays or closures due to inclement weather.
- All OST participants must be members of the YMCA or be part of an existing family membership.
- Payments are due Monday by program close for services beginning the following Monday.
- Late payments will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee. Overdue payments may result in termination from the program.
- Parents whose payments are more than two weeks late will be asked to withdraw their child from the OST program.
- Parents are responsible for payment for holidays which fall on their child's scheduled day.
- Parents are responsible for payment when their child does not attend the OST program on their scheduled day.
- There are no refunds or credits towards another day.

- Parents are expected to pay for extra days used, when applicable.
- A non refundable pre-payment equal to the first weeks tuition will be required at the time of registration to reserve the child's slot, and will be applied to the first weeks charge.
- If the child care facility remains open during inclement weather on your child's scheduled day, no additional fee will be charged.
- Parents accessing vouchers must keep them current or will be required to pay the full fee if the voucher expires.

Financial Assistance

The tuition is based on covering the operating cost of the program. Our annual Reach-Out for Youth campaign helps to keep tuition reasonable while allowing us to provide quality programming. Through the YMCA's ACCESS Program, we offer reduced rates to individuals and families who cannot afford the full price of membership or program. Eligibility is based on income level, family size, and funds available. The Director/Coordinator at each branch locations is available for more details.

Children's Records

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The YMCA does not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's parent. We would notify the parent if a child's file is requested by subpoena.

Access to the record: parents have access to a child's file at reasonable times. In no event would such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request with the consent of the child's parent. Upon such request for access, the child's entire record, regardless of the physical location of its parts, is made available. The YMCA follows procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of such information; and maintains a permanent written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. Each person disseminating or releasing information contained in a child's record, in whole or in part, will enter into a log the following: his/her name, signature, position, the date, the portion of the records which were disseminated or released, the purpose of such dissemination or release, and the signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or released. That log is available only to the child's parent and program personnel responsible for record maintenance.

Charge for copies: A nominal fee may be charged for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

Amending the child's records: A child's parent has the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record, and a child's parent has the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

If a parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify, or correct objectionable material in the child's record, he/she has the right to have a conference with the Director to make his/her objections known; the Director will, within

one (1) week after the conference, render to the parent a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If his/her decision is in favor of the parent, the Director will immediately take steps as necessary to put the decision into effect.

Transfer of records: upon written request of the parent, the licensee will transfer the child's record to the parent, or any other person the parent identifies, when the child is not longer in the YMCA OST Program. The Center requires the parent to sign a form verifying that the record was received.

Confidentiality of Records

All information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential and cannot be released without parental written consent. Authorized representatives from the Department of Early Education and Care and Department of Children, Department of Public Health, and Department of Children and Families have the right and responsibility to review all records for regulatory purposes and for purposes of intervention.

The Department of Early Education and Care requests that the YMCA share its obligations to parents as outlined in State regulations related to early education and school age programming:

Parent's Rights

Parent visits: the YMCA encourages parents to visit the Center and their child's room while their child is present.

Parent input: licensee shall have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of Center policy and programs. Director informs parents of their rights as parents to offer input into the program. Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's Lead Teacher. If they are not comfortable approaching the staff member, the parent and Director develop a plan together to work towards a resolution. Licensee shall provide an explanation to the parent when a parent makes suggestions as the program or policy of a Center and the suggestions are not adopted by the licensee. If the parent requests a written response, the licensee shall respond in writing to the parent. The program will decide whether or no the parental suggestions will be implemented.

Progress Reports: licensee shall periodically but at least every six (6) months prepare a written progress report of the participation of each child in the Center's records. Licensee shall provide a copy of each report to the parent or meet with them at least every six (6) months to discuss their child's activities and participation in the center. In addition: for infants under fifteen months of age or children with disabilities, the licensee shall complete a written progress report of the child's development every three (3) months, and provide it to the parent; licensee shall bring special problems or significant developments particularly as they regard to infants, to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

Meeting prior to admittance: licensee shall assure that the administrator of his designee meets with parent prior to admitting the child to the Center. At the meeting, the licensee, in addition to the information contained in this fact sheet, must provide parent

with: the Center's written statements of purpose; types of services provide; referral policy; child guidance policy; termination and suspension policy; a list of suggested nutritious foods to send for snacks and meals; policy for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect; transportation plan; a copy of the health care policy (if requested); procedure for administration of medication; procedures for providing emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; and a copy of the fee schedule. All of this information may be contained in the "Family Handbook".

Parents should also be given the opportunity to visit the Center's classrooms either at the time of the meeting prior to the enrollment of the child.

Parent Conferences: licensee shall make the staff available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

Availability of Regulations

The Center maintains copies of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, and makes them available to any person upon request. If parents have questions about any of the regulations, a copy may be requested from the Program Director.