

VALLEY SHORE YMCA



School Age Program

2022 - 2023

Parent Handbook



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Valley Shore YMCA School-Age Program Parent Handbook

Thank you for registering your child for our School Age Child Care Program. We strongly believe that every child needs a safe and rewarding experience each and every day. Our program is designed to provide an environment where each child can learn and grow through a wide variety of exciting activities that promote youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We maintain a strong commitment to building character in youth through our four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

During the school year, the School Age Child Care Programs will operate based on the public school calendars, as determined by each district.

Eligibility: This program is open to all children Grade K and above who attend any of the 3 schools we serve (Goodwin School in Old Saybrook, Joel School in Clinton, and Chester Elementary.) Registration for these programs is processed at the Valley Shore YMCA in Westbrook. A registration fee of \$25.00 per child is required; this is non-refundable and non-transferable.

Hours of Operation: The program normally begins at 7 am and ends at 6 pm. Children will not be accepted into the program prior to 7 am.

Arrival and departure: To comply with state regulations, you must sign your child in and out every day including signature and time of arrival/departure.

Authorized pick-up: In order to comply with state regulations, children will be released only to those individuals listed on the authorized pick-up list in the child's file. Anyone who is picking up for the first time, including parents, or someone who the staff does not recognize will be asked to show photo identification. This is done for the safety of each child in our program.

Late pick-up fees: Please make every effort to pick up your child by 6pm. If for any reason you feel you may be late, please try to make arrangements to have an authorized individual pick up your child. If you arrive late, a fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes will be charged to your account. Continued lateness may jeopardize your child's spot in the program.

Child not picked up: If a child hasn't been picked up by **6:05pm** the staff will contact the child's parent/guardian. If they are unable to reach you and your child is not picked up **6:15pm**, emergency contacts will be called. At **6:30pm**, if they are still unable to contact an authorized person to pick up your child, the Y staff will contact the local Police Department.

School Closings/ Inclement Weather

Delayed Opening: If a school has a delayed opening, our morning program mirrors the same delay. For example, if a school has a 1 hr delay, the morning program will be delayed 1 hr and will open at 8:00 AM instead of 7 AM.

Early Closing: If a school has determined that it needs to close early, the Y program will begin calling families and ask for children to be picked up as soon as possible.

The Valley Shore YMCA reserves the right to close/delay opening in the event of severe weather. Decisions regarding early closing due to storms will be made in conjunction with the Valley Shore YMCA and school administration based upon the severity of each storm and could vary from storm to storm. Parents will be called if programs are closed early. If parents cannot be reached, a person from the child's pick-up list will be called. You must have local people on your child's pick up list. Please understand that each storm is different and the safety and well-being of our children and staff are our focus.

Registration forms and requirements: Children must be registered in advance. We do not accept unregistered children. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.** Students may attend the program for 1 to 5 days per week. Specific days must be chosen at registration and adhered to. Mandatory forms include:

- School-Age Child Care Registration and Release Form
- School-Age Child Care Payment Authorization Form
- Health Form
- School-Age Child Care Behavior Contract
- Authorization for Medication Administration Form (if needed)
- Additional forms specific to the School Age Child Care Program your child attends may be required
- **Legal Custody and Injunctions:** A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction must be kept on file at the Y.

Payment policy and service fees: The School Age Child Care Programs are tuition based. The yearly cost per child for the program is based on the calendar days in the school year and divided into 10 equal monthly payments. Tuition rates are available online, by contacting the Y and in the program's registration packet. Monthly payments remain the same regardless of

weather related closing, absences, and holidays. All families are required to use auto-bill payment for program tuition. Automatic payments will be drafted on the 1st of each month prior to services rendered. A \$25 late payment fee will be assessed if credit card or EFT payments are returned.

Fees will be charged regardless of attendance: There is no partial payment if a child is out sick. The only exception would be if a child were away from the program due to a prolonged illness. In such a case, the School Age Director should be notified at the beginning of the absence not upon returning to the program. No credit will be given for time missed without a doctor's note.

Financial aid: The Y's Financial Assistance Program provides funds to families based on need. Financial Aid is limited; please apply early.

Changes to registration: Changes to existing registrations are effective on the first of the month and must be made in writing to the School Age Director 10 days prior to the first day of the month of the change.

Withdrawal from the program: Should you withdraw from the program, one month written notice, prior to the last day is required. If written notice is not received, the full monthly payment will be charged.

Parental concerns: If your child is having a problem while attending the School Age Program, we ask that you inform us of the situation as soon as possible so that we may be more effective in providing a solution. Any abrasive behavior by a parent displayed towards any Y staff member or program participant may result in suspension or cancellation of care. If something is unsatisfactory, please speak with the Head Teacher at your child's site.

Insurance: The Y does not provide health or accident insurance. The parent/guardian assumes total liability for all charges incurred for medical treatment or property damage.

Health regulations and records: A health form must be kept on file for each child in the program and be provided by the parent or guardian before the start of the school year.

Records: In addition to current health records, the School Age program is required to keep accurate personal records for each child in the program. Changes in information indicated on the forms must be reported to the staff immediately. Contact information must be kept up to date to insure that we can contact you immediately in case of emergency.

Program activities: Organized games and activities are planned including homework time, outside play, gym time, healthy afternoon snack and special activities. We provide the opportunity and assistance for children to do their homework but are not responsible for

monitoring studies. It is the responsibility of parents to encourage their children to do homework during the aftercare program.

Medication administration in the school age program: State regulation requires that a completed medical authorization form must be signed by a physician and by the parent. This form should include the name of medication, time to be administered and prescribed dose to be given. One form is required per medication. No controlled medication is allowed to be sent in with a child. Medication may be dropped off before the child's start date at the Y. All medication needs to be picked up at the end of your child's enrollment in the program. Any medication not picked up within one week of your child's last day at the program will be properly disposed of. Medication must be kept current.

The medication **must** have the **original bottle or packaging and prescription label** including:

- Child's name
- Dosage/route of administration (mouth, inhalation)
- Specific time/intervals to be given
- Current date of order
- Physician's name and telephone number

Illness & Medication

Communicable diseases: Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in our program: temperature of 101 or higher, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, head lice, vomiting, diarrhea, rash of unknown origin, or the presence of a contagious disease.

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during their time in our program. Our program is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during their time in our program and parents cannot be reached.

Once a parent has been notified, the child should be picked up from the YMCA program within one hour. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick up their child within one hour, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. If a parent is unable to be reached, the staff will begin to call people listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Injuries/Accidents: If a child is injured during program hours, a staff person certified in first aid will treat the child if the injury is minor. If the injury is of a serious nature and emergency care is needed, the parent will be notified immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, the YMCA will

take necessary steps to obtain an ambulance. Emergency personnel will determine which emergency treatment center to transport the child to.

Should your child be injured during the course of the day, an injury report will be completed by a staff member. You will be asked to review the report and sign off that you have been notified of the injury and given a copy of the form.

Plan for consultation: The School Age Program has agreements with educational, dental, social services, and health professionals. The professionals are available for annual review of our policies and program. They are also available for consultation as needed.

Child Abuse/Neglect: Legal Requirements: All School Age Staff providers are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report suspected child abuse, child neglect and child risk to the Department of Children and Families. We are not required to inform parents or guardians if such a report is made.

Parental substance abuse policy: If any staff member of the Y suspects' substance abuse on the part of a parent or guardian, the Y staff will call an authorized adult on the release form to pick up the child. If the parent or guardian is aggressive or threatening, the Y staff will call the police or 911. According to state regulations, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be notified of any presumed substance abuse. If the situation happens more than once, the Y reserves the right to discontinue care for the child enrolled in the program.

Behavior management: The Y believes in positive behavior based upon the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The child care environment is one in which children are nurtured and encouraged. The staff and other children acknowledge positive behavior. We recognize that behavior issues will arise and therefore, we have developed progressive procedures that, while standardized, are adaptable to individual circumstances.

The first procedure is to resolve the problem through a discussion and agreement with the child. It may also be necessary to implement alternative methods including re-direction, problem solving, separation, or time out. When using time out, children will be separated from the group in an area with staff supervision for a period of time equivalent to one minute per year of the child's life. The child will not be put in a corner, outside of a door, or facing the wall. After the specified time and when the child is ready, the teacher will quickly review the rule, and the child will join the group.

If we are not able to resolve the problem, the second procedure is to involve the parents to discuss the behavior and how to work together with the child to resolve it. If continued and extreme violation of rules established in the behavior contract and provided within your

registration package, the third procedure is to call the parent to pick up the child. A meeting with the Program Director to discuss a plan of action may be required.

If none of the above results in a satisfactory resolution of the inappropriate behavior, the last procedure would be to suspend or expel the child from the program. Some behaviors may warrant our skipping procedures depending upon the severity of the inappropriate behavior. Behaviors that involve physical harm or verbal attack toward other children or staff will not be tolerated.

Snacks: The YMCA provides an afternoon healthy snack each day. The YMCA has adopted the Y's healthy eating and physical activity standards (HEPA) for our after school program. The snack menu will be posted at each site location. Snacks will consist of one serving of fruit (typically juice) and one food from the grain group (crackers, popcorn, etc.)

Outdoor play: The YMCA follows the healthy physical guidelines and encourages all children to participate in a variety of 30 minutes of daily physical activity opportunities that are appropriate for their age group.

Legal custody: We require a copy of the legal custodial agreement in situations when parents are unable to pick up their children on specific days or at all. If a court has not determined parental custody, both parents have a right to pick-up their children and we are not legally allowed to keep a parent from picking their child up from our program.

Parent involvement and communication: We strongly believe that parent involvement is a key ingredient in a quality child care program. We have an open door policy and you are welcome and encouraged to visit the program at any time your child is enrolled. Parents and visitors are required to sign in with the staff prior to visiting their child.

In order to understand each child better, the staff welcomes any opportunity to talk to parents about their children. It is critical that the lines of communication stay open. If communication is frequent, together we can provide security and continuity for your children. Any time during a child's participation in the program a parent may request a meeting with the staff to discuss the child's needs. The meeting will be set at a time that is convenient for both the parent and staff.

Parents are encouraged to share a special talent, hobby or vocation with our children. Contributions of toys, supplies for creative art projects and scrap office paper are very useful and are always appreciated by the children and staff.

Individual care plans: If your child has special health care or developmental needs you will need to complete the appropriate individual care plan for your child. Care plans will be required for severe allergies, asthma, seizure disorder, chronic illness, specific dietary needs, hearing or

visual impairments, history of a contagious disease or specifics such as development delays. If your child has special health concerns please contact the School Age Director to obtain the appropriate care plan. This form is used to ensure all staff caring for your child are aware of his/her specific needs.

Electronic devices and toy policy: The Y does not allow your child to bring toys, expensive or valued items to the program. There is always a risk that something can be broken or lost. **Phones, iPods, DSs, or any other electronic devices should be kept at home.** The Y is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items.

Chain of command: We value your input and want to hear your positive feedback or concerns about the program. As a first step, please attempt to resolve any issues with the teachers or site coordinator. If you feel the problem has not been remedied, please contact the School-Age Director.

YMCA Outside Care Policy: The YMCA prohibits its staff from providing outside care services to YMCA members and program participants. Outside Care Services are defined as babysitting, instruction or tutoring, giving swim lessons, life-guarding, transportation, etc. and are provided off YMCA premises and on the employee's own time.

The purpose of this handbook is to promote understanding of our program and its policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, you may call the School Age Program Director. Our caregivers are committed to providing you and your child with the best possible service. Together we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for children between school and home.

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