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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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Merrimack Valley YMCA Parent Handbook Addendum – School Age

Updated August 24, 2020

The safety of our children, families and staff is always our number one priority. As we enter a new school year, filled with uncertainty, we wanted to consolidate and share our updated policies & procedures related to remote learning support and the on-going COVID-19 precautions. We hope this level of communication supports a smooth transition to welcome you and your family back to the YMCA.

This is an addendum to our Handbook and is subject to change based guidance from the Department of Early Education and Care. It includes updated policies and procedures related to COVID-19 and outlines changes to program regulations during COVID times. Please speak to your Program Director if you have any questions or concerns.

Here's the link to the [Revised Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety from EEC](#)

Welcome

- Registration
 - You will receive confirmation of your child's placement and acceptance into the program from your Program Director. Space in the program is limited and the need far exceeds capacity.

- Screening
 - Each morning you will be asked to complete a Health Attestation for your child prior to arriving at the program. Upon arrival the staff will ensure you have completed the form and ask if the information is still true and up to date. If any of the questions are answered "yes" the child will not be permitted into the program. Further, the child must be symptom free for 72 hours before admittance into the program.

Health attestations will ask for **Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19.**

- The following symptoms, if observed in a child or staff member are cause for immediate isolation and exclusion from child care:
 - Fever (100.0°F and higher), feverish, had chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Gastrointestinal distress (Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea)
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - New muscle aches
- The following symptoms, if observed in combination with symptoms from above list, are cause for immediate isolation and exclusion from child care:
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Runny nose or congestion
 - Any other signs of illness
- Parents who decline to complete the screening will not be permitted to drop off their child.
- Staff will also be required to complete the attestation and screening each day before their shift begins.
- Drop off procedures
 - For the initial weeks of the program drop-off will be contact-less and outside; we will assign you a window of time you can arrive to drop-off. As time progresses this may change and we'll keep you informed of any changes.
 - Upon arrival to the room, your child's belongings will be stored in an individual cubby/locker/bin/crate and they will wash their hands before starting their remote school day.
 - Face masks must be worn by the drop off parent/guardian, the staff and the child.
- Pick up procedures
 - For the initial start of the program pick-up will be contact-less and outside; we will assign you a window of time you can arrive to pick-up. As time progresses this may change and we'll keep you informed of any changes.

- Each afternoon when you arrive at the designated pick up location, staff will have gathered your child's belongings and escorted your child from the Program to you.

Remote Learning

- Classroom Spaces
 - Your child should arrive to the Program with their school supplies, including school-assigned Chrome Book or iPad, headphones, and other necessary items.
 - Our spaces are designed to comply with state and local guidelines for health & safety; and everyone will wear masks in situations where they cannot maintain physical distance.
 - Cohorts of children will be grouped in quiet rooms for study and remote learning with Wi-Fi to support video chats, streaming media and other online school requirements.
 - **There will be limited access to electrical outlets, please ensure your child's electronic devices are charged overnight for each program day.**
 - YMCA staff's responsibility is to help your child stay actively engaged in the learning environment and content and support them with their assignments.
 - Your child's responsibility is to stay on track with assignment completion and deadlines.
 - Staff are not responsible for your child's grading. It is the responsibility of child and family to ensure successful completion of school work.
 - Internet Etiquette: children are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Avoid offensive or inflammatory speech
 - Be courteous and polite
 - Profanity or obscenities are not permitted at any time
 - Do not use the network in any way to disrupt the work of others
 - All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property
 - Many children will adapt to this new learning environment reasonably well, however some may feel isolated, anxious or distressed. You can:
 - Maintain normal routines at home
 - Plan and encourage regular off-screen time at home
 - Encourage your child to remain physically active
 - 'Check in' with your child regularly
 - Help your child manage their worries and emotions associated with these challenging times
 - Share your concerns with Y staff who can provide additional resources
- Individual Education Plans

At this time there are limited in-person services available for children. Telehealth and virtual visits for specialized services for children are still preferable in order to keep the

child care program virus free. We recognize however, that there are some services that are not possible to provide via telehealth, that cannot be provided at any other time of the day, or that the telehealth or a virtual model is not developmentally appropriate for the child. In these cases, service providers are allowed to provide in-person services on a limited basis provided that they complete a health screen, wear appropriate PPE, and do not mix with discrete groups of children.

- Personal belongings
 - Your child's personal belongings should be limited and they must be secured in a zippered backpack or tote.
 - The YMCA is not responsible or liable for lost or damaged belongings.
 - Please remember to send your child with a re-fillable water bottle and in comfortable clothing.
 - No personal belonging can be left/stored in the program spaces overnight.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - The Department of Early Education and Care requires staff to wear masks at all times while in the program.
 - When 6 feet of distance is not possible, face mask use requirements for children is as follows:
 - Children age 7 and older must wear a face mask.
 - Children age 2-6 who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle face masks must be encouraged to wear face masks and must be supervised at all times while wearing a face mask.
 - Parents are required to provide masks for their child every day and a back-up mask should be stored in a plastic bag in their backpack as back-up. Masks should be clearly marked with your child's name.
 - Masks must be worn by the parent/guardian dropping off and picking up.
 - Hand washing is required before and after all transitions, trips to the bathroom, meals and other all other activities.
 - We will have hand sanitizer and readily available in all spaces.

- Operating hours
 - The Program's operating hours will be 7:30 am -5:00 pm with scheduling to support staggered drop offs and pick-ups. Families may opt for a 7:30-4:00 or a 8:00-5:00 schedule. As the school district's school-day learning plans change we will reevaluate our hours and schedules.

- The program day will be structured for your child to participate in their remote learning and schoolwork during the first part of the day; and then creative enrichment and physical activities for the remainder of the day.
- **Communication**
 - During this health-crisis it is imperative that YMCA staff are able to reach you or another authorized contact, quickly, in an emergency. Please ensure we have multiple means of contact and they are always up-to-date.
 - **You are required to provide us with all your child's remote learning information and continue to update us as changes occur. This includes but is not limited to: log-in information to school learning platforms, websites, and passwords.**
 - We will provide you with a daily accounting of your child's "time on learning."
 - Because drop-off and pick-up will be contact-less and on a tight schedule, it will not allow for the typical parent/staff communication. Program Directors and Lead staff will be available by phone throughout the program day and can also schedule virtual meetings if necessary.

COVID-19 is having an unprecedented effect on children and families across the City and Commonwealth. We know children are managing more stress, less social connection and new ways of learning in a virtual environment. As we work through what our new normal will look like, we are here to support you and your family as they transition "back to school." Here are a few resources for you:

- [Tips and Activities for Children](#)
- [Family Resources](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Child about a Scary Event](#)
- **Physical activity**
 - Physical activity is an integral part of your child's healthy growth & development. Each classroom will have scheduled time for "recess" during the learning portion of the day and opportunities to participate in physical activity in the afternoon.
- **Swimming (Andover/North Andover and Lawrence YMCA locations only)**
 - Each cohort of children will have scheduled swim time each week during afternoon activities. Please remember to send your child with their bathing suit and towel on swim days.
 - High touch spaces in the pool and locker rooms will be cleaned and sanitized between swim groups.

- We will maintain all bather-load ratios as defined by state guidelines.
- We will provide Coast Guard Approved PFDs for your child (and clean and sanitize them between uses per state guidelines).
- Hand washing. Children and staff will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel in the following scenarios/instances:
 - Upon entry into the program space
 - When coming into the classroom from outside
 - Before and after eating
 - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing
 - After bathroom use
 - Before handling food
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
 - After using any shared equipment
 - Staff specific: after assisting children with handwashing
 - Staff specific: before and after administering medication
 - Staff specific: Between changes of gloves
- Cleaning procedures

Staff shall ensure all equipment is properly sanitized or disinfected to prevent the spread of infection. The goal of safe cleaning is effective germ control using the safest amount of cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting product.

 - The sanitizing and disinfecting solutions used in our Program is either a bleach solution prepared by the program daily or a commercial product registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Manufacturer's instructions are followed.
 - The Program will intensify our routine cleaning, sanitizing/disinfecting practices, paying extra attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, including door knobs, bathrooms and sinks, tables, and banisters.
 - The Program will clean and disinfect toys and activity items used by children.
 - Our classrooms will be misted nightly.

Illness Policies and Isolation Procedures

- Staff will actively monitor children throughout the day for symptoms. Children who appear ill or are exhibiting signs of illness must be separated from the group and isolated until picked up by a parent. A staff person will use a non-contact thermometer if a child is suspected of having a fever.

- If a child appears to have severe symptoms, we will call 911 immediately then call a parent/guardian
- The isolated child will be made comfortable and properly supervised by staff (wearing PPE) until pick up.

Children will not be allowed to return to the Program until they are symptom-free for 72 hours.

- COVID-19 Exposure of staff or children
 - If a child or staff is exposed to COVID-19 regardless of symptoms, the child or staff must remain home for 14 days.
 - The Program will notify the Department of Education and Care and connect with the Department of Public Health and the local board of health for guidance on quarantine for other children and staff as well as additional information regarding the continuation or potential temporary suspension of child care services.
 - If a child or staff's household member tests positive for COVID-19, the child or staff must self-quarantine for 14 days from the last time they could have been exposed.

- In the event we are informed of a COVID-19 positive individual in our program, or a COVID-19 positive individual shares a home with an individual in the program we will:
 - **REPORT** the positive case to the Department of Public Health using the COVID-19 Positive Reporting Form from the Department of Early Education and Care
 - **CONNECT** with an Epidemiologist from the Department of Public Health to discuss next steps.
 - **IMPLEMENT** our communication plan
 - The Program Director will notify the Executive Director of Child Care Services.
 - The Program Director and or Executive Director of Child Care Services will notify
 - Executive Director of Child Care Services will notify the COO.

Individual Health Care Plans

- Program Directors will meet with the families of children who have IHCP's to discuss their individual needs and how COVID-19 may impact their child's health and treatment.
- Meeting with include:

- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to speak to their child's health care provider to ensure group child care is a safe environment for their child's condition and discuss alternative treatments to nebulizers
- Families will be informed that nebulizers are permitted, with restrictions, in the Program due to the increased risk of the virus being aerosolized.
- Staff will review each child's IHCP for updated information and be trained according to the plan

Tuition

- Current tuition policies including policies on vacation and absences will remain in effect.

Travel

- If children or staff **travel anywhere by plane** they must wait 14 days before returning to the program.
- If children or staff **travel to any state other than CO, CT, DE, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, WV, or VT** they must wait 14 days before returning to the program.

Meals

- The YMCA will provide morning snack, lunch and a supper each day. (Lawrence and Methuen)
- Andover/North Andover and Boxford locations, the YMCA will provide morning and afternoon snack, parents/guardians will provide lunch.

Parent Visits

- Non-Essential Visitors are not allowed in the Program at this time, therefore the open door policy is not applicable and parents cannot drop in to the program. Program staff will be available for virtual conferences with parents at your request.

COVID Testing:

If by federal, state or local regulation, edict, order, or related authority, a child in my/our care is required or recommended to be tested for COVID-19 and/or is required or instructed to isolate or quarantine due to reasons related to COVID-19, the child will not be allowed to return to the YMCA until such time as a test result of a negative finding is provided to the YMCA or the isolation or quarantine period has elapsed (or both, where applicable). Individualized instructions to isolate or quarantine are issued by medical providers and/or local or state officials and I/we,

guardians of the child, hereby affirm that I/we will follow those instructions. Guardians are advised that their child's return to the program is based upon guidance and requirements established by government entities including the local board of health and the MA Department of Public Health. If the guardian(s) of the child refuse(s) to follow necessary COVID-19 safety protocol (in the absence of a reasonable accommodation or other compelling reason, as approved by the YMCA), the child shall immediately be dismissed from the YMCA program.

Hand Sanitizer

I give permission for my child to use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) in the program:

Yes No

Acknowledgement

The undersigned fully understands and appreciates both the known and potential dangers of utilizing the facilities, services, and programs of the YMCA and acknowledges that use thereof by the undersigned and/or such participating children may, despite the YMCA's reasonable efforts to mitigate such dangers, result in exposure to COVID-19, which could result in quarantine requirements, serious illness, disability, and/or death.

I understand the policies and protocols may change based on the public health data, information from CDC, DPH, BOH, and/or EEC. I will adhere to this Merrimack Valley YMCA Addendum to the Parent Handbook.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____