



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING WITH A SMILE

**MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA
SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM PARENT HANDBOOK**



CONTACTS

Executive Director of Child Care Services/ Methuen YMCA Executive Director:

Cathy Redard
129 Haverhill Street
Methuen, MA 01844
credard@mvymca.org

Andover/North Andover YMCA

165 Haverhill Street
Andover, MA 01810
978-685-3541

Coordinador: Erica Little

Lawrence YMCA

40 Lawrence Street
Lawrence, MA 01841
978.686.6191

Coordinador: Janina Santiago

Methuen YMCA/Association Behavioral Technician

129 Haverhill Street
Methuen, MA 01844
978.683.5266

Coordinator: Frances Hernandez

YMCA @ Harry Lee Cole School

One Middleton Road
Boxford, MA 01921
978.479.9765

Coordinator: Matt Corsetti



Dear School Age Family,

Welcome to the Merrimack Valley YMCA School Age program. We are delighted that you have chosen our program. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive experience for your child with plenty of opportunities for growth in spirit, mind, and body.



As your child spends a significant amount of quality time in our program, an amazing impact in your child's development will occur. In all settings, attitudes are formed, ideas of self-worth are developed, relationships with peers and adults are experienced, and positive values are promoted.

Our program is designed to provide each child with a variety of positive, healthy, and engaging activities throughout each week. Our Program is divided according to age groups taking into consideration the child's age and school grade level.

We have fun learning centers which include the Art Center, literacy, physical activity, nutrition, etc.

The school age educators are trained and experienced in working with school age children. Many of our educators have or are working towards degrees in education, human services and/or early education and care. The YMCA provides its staff with ongoing training throughout the year. All of our educators meet the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) requirements and are trained in CPR, First Aid and AED Essentials.

You will notice that our registration packet includes a space for your child's personal information. Many parents are hesitant about sharing the personal aspects of their child's behavior or past experience. Some parents fear that the information may be misused while others are concerned about their child being "labeled", singled out, or treated differently. We appreciate these concerns and can assure you that the information will only be used to aid the staff in working with your child. Please take a moment to talk to your child about these questions. This handbook is designed to assist you in better understanding the philosophy, policies, and procedures of our program. We encourage you to review this booklet with your child and retain it for future reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to us. We welcome your comments, questions, and feedback regarding our program.

Thank you for choosing us to meet your child care needs. You have chosen a quality program for your child that focuses on safety as a number one priority. As a team, we can better assure your child a successful experience in our program.

Welcome to our YMCA family!

Sincerely,

Cathy Redard

Cathy Redard

Executive Director of Child Care Services

MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION

To strengthen our communities by putting our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility into action through programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

VISION

To be a leading community collaborator in the Merrimack Valley that achieves bold results in the areas of Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.

CORE VALUES

Our Y upholds the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. These values guide our behaviors as we work to strengthen the foundation of community.

PROMISE OF INCLUSION

The Merrimack Valley YMCA intentionally commits to facilitating positive and lasting change with our communities. Our Y focuses on providing an environment that celebrates diversity, advances equity, and reflects inclusion for all, both inside and outside of our walls. Our Y welcomes our community to show up authentically, to speak up courageously, and to create a space for all to be, belong and become.

In 2016, Massachusetts passed "An Act Relative to Transgender Anti-Discrimination", giving all people the right to access the locker rooms, changing rooms, and bathrooms that align with their gender identity. In accordance with both Massachusetts Law and our Promise of Inclusion, we support our transgender community and strive to ensure a welcoming inclusive facility for all. We do have individual restrooms for those who wish to change in a private space. We are committed to providing a safe and accessible space for all of our members, guests, and staff. If you have any questions, please contact the Branch Executive Director or the Chief Operating Officer.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The Merrimack Valley YMCA's School Age Program was established to serve children from ages 5 through 13. The purpose of the program is to provide a safe, supportive environment that fosters the physical, social, cognitive, and emotional growth of each child. Our program is licensed and meets the standards of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and is in compliance with State and local regulations related to building codes, fire laws, and health and safety guidelines.

PHILOSOPHY

The Merrimack Valley YMCA is dedicated to developing spirit, mind, and body through programs which strengthen families, develop leadership in youth, promote healthy lifestyles, build international understanding and assist in community development. Our program is designed to both enrich and complement the child's school experience. We strive to provide a safe and healthy environment. Our programs are staffed with capable sensitive, caring and energetic staff who understand children's needs and who also take part in ongoing staff development and plan well organized, age appropriate activities and games.

REGISTRATION

Our School Age Program runs on a year round basis with 12 scheduled holiday closings and an on-going open enrollment. We do not operate on public school vacation closing. In order to simplify the registration process, here is the "How to Register" list:

- Pick up a Child Care application at your branch of choice: Andover, Methuen or Lawrence
- Ask for a tour of the School Age Program and facility
- **Fill out all forms completely.** (You can do this at the time you pick up the forms or you can take them with you and bring them fully completed at another time). When you have completed all portions of the application, please return it with the following items:

- First week's tuition and a one week deposit.
- A copy of parent/guardian photo ID
- A current photo of the child.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate.
- A copy of the child's Social Security Card.
- IEP (Individualize Educational Plan); if applicable



Please note your child cannot start the program until the YMCA has all the required information on file which includes the first week's tuition and a one week deposit. A call will be made to you by the Site Coordinator notifying you that your child can start or notifying you of any missing information that must be turned in. Children are accepted on a first come/first serve basis. If a classroom happens to be full at the time of registration, your child can be put on the waitlist until a spot becomes available. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. Also it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep the information contained on the enrollment forms current. It is imperative that we are notified immediately of any changes to emergency information, home or school telephone numbers, and persons authorized to pick up the children at the end of the day.



Tuition is based on a weekly fee. On holidays and full days, a full day rate is applied. Parents are responsible for payment of every day the child is **scheduled** to attend whether or not they attend. Tuition should be made payable to Merrimack Valley YMCA and made at your local branch. Checks, money orders, credit cards, and cash are all accepted. Failure to make payments may result in the dismissal of your child from the program. Parents are responsible for maintaining childcare receipts for tax purposes. Receipts are placed in your child's mailbox after payments have been processed. Returned checks will result in a \$25.00 bank charge assessed to your account. If

more than two checks are returned for insufficient payment, parents will be required to pay their tuition with cash, money order or credit card.

Checks will not be accepted. Rates for the school year are listed on the **Parent Service Agreement** form. All parents must read and sign this agreement in order to register their child (ren) in our program.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Tuition is based on covering the operating costs of the program. The YMCA's annual campaign helps to keep tuition costs at a reasonable rate while allowing us to provide quality programming. Through the YMCA's financial assistance program we are able to offer reduced rates to individuals and families who cannot afford the full price of tuition. Eligibility is based on income level, family size, and the availability of funds. Please see the Site Coordinator for details. We may also have funding available through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and through the department of Early Education and Care. These are all contingent upon grant acquisition. Please ask for an application to see if you qualify. We also accept vouchers from the Child Care Circuit.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents must submit a written two (2) week notice to the Site Coordinator to withdraw or change enrollment and sign a new Parent Service Agreement. You are responsible for payment during these weeks regardless of your child's attendance. Reductions or discounts of program fees cannot be given. Financial issues can be discussed with the Contract Administrator.

Program fees will only be refunded in full if the YMCA cancels a program. Refunds will not be given for any other reason

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent, you must call the Site Coordinator and notify the program of the absence. This helps with daily attendance issues. Please call your local YMCA to let the Site Coordinator know that your child will be absent. Parents are held responsible for payment even if the child is absent. Parents must also pay even for planned vacations. We do not give discounts for vacations. For parents receiving voucher assistance through the state, if your child is absent for more than thirty (30) days in a 6 month period (from January to June and July to December), your voucher can and will be terminated. If your child is ill and is out of the program due to this illness, you must bring a doctor's note. If you are going on a planned vacation, please request a vacation form from the Site Coordinator. We must keep written request on file.

TRANSPORTATION

School Year Arrival

If your child needs transportation from the school to the YMCA, you need to fill a transportation request form and contract which are in the registration



packet. We arrange transportation from the schools to our program sites. The children are under the supervision of the public school personnel until pickup by the YMCA Bus. The YMCA school age program accepts responsibility of all children when they board the bus and arrive at the designated site. **We are not responsible for children who miss the bus.** If a child misses the YMCA bus, the child will return to the public schools office. The school will notify the YMCA site coordinator and they will make every effort to contact the bus company to see if it is possible to return to the school. If the bus can't go back, the parent is responsible for picking up the child at the school. When a child is not transported by a contracted vehicle, an adult must accompany the child into the program, sign the child in and notify a staff member that they are there.

Children will only be released to an adult over 18 years of age. We must have **written authorization** from a parent to release a child to anyone not listed on the transportation release form. Please understand that **we will ask for identification from anyone that we are not familiar with, even if we have written authorization.** This policy is to ensure the safety of your child.

Summer/holidays Arrival

The YMCA does not provide transportation during summer and holidays. Parents are responsible for walking their child into the building and signing them in with their group leaders. Children must be dropped off by 9:00 am.

LATE PICK UP

If the child is not picked up by 6:00pm, an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute will be applied. This fee is payable at the time of pick up. **Please note if you fail to make this payment at the time of pick up, the late fee will be assessed to your account.**

If you know that you are running late or have an emergency, please call us so we can reassure your child. Depending on the situation, a late fee may or may not be charged. If a parent is late and has not notified the Y, the closing educator will begin to call the parents first and move on to the emergency contacts to transport the child home. If contact is not made with parents or emergency contacts within a 45 minute period, the police and Department of Children and Families will be called.

Organizational Chart

- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
- Board of Directors
- CEO/President: Frank Kenneally
- COO: Claudia Soo Hoo
- Executive Director of Child Care Services: Cathy Redard
- Site Coordinators
- School Age Group Leaders
- School Age Group Leader Assistants

Transition Policy

Kindergarten to School Age

The Transition between preschool to kindergarten takes place in August. Once the preschool children enter kindergarten, they are eligible to attend the after school programs. Thus, in mid-July, the Site Coordinators

and the Preschool Directors set up a meeting to discuss potential students moving up to the After School program. Letters get sent home to the parents of those children and they are invited to an open house. During the open house, the children that will be attending kindergarten get to spend the evening with their September group leader. Kindergarteners that transition to school age have specific schedules different from the rest of the groups. They are transitioned into their classroom where the Group Leaders stay specifically in the classroom and are not moved around within centers like the other groups do. Previous to moving into the next classroom group, the younger students visit two to three times for a few hours in the afternoon.

Arrival and Centers transitions

Every afternoon is different for each group. Upon arrival, the groups meet up, wash their hands, have snack and then transition into homework time. Each child spends time doing their homework assignment for the night. They then break into groups where they participate of structured curriculum activities. Group leaders are assigned to each group based on the number of children and the specific needs of the children in each group.

Bathroom Transition

Children go to the bathroom in groups. A group leader or group leader assistant escorts them to the bathroom. The group leader positions himself/herself with one foot in the bathroom and one in the hallway straddling the entranceway. They stand in the hallway and help students going in and out of the bathroom.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

We believe the success of our programs and ultimately your child's experience lies in the quality of our staff. Our staff is carefully selected based on their experience, education, talents and interpersonal skills. Many of our staff return year after year and are employed in other YMCA departments such as summer camps or clubs, membership and other programs areas.

Our School Age Child Care staff comes together for an in-depth orientation training to cover such areas as program goals, emergency procedures, behavior management, group work, and curriculum planning. Our school age staff brings a multitude of experiences and backgrounds to the table. All of our staff undergo a criminal background check and attend YMCA Child Abuse Prevention. All staff is certified in CPR, First Aid and AED essentials. Above all, our school age staff has one thing in common: a love for working with children!!

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN SERVED

The YMCA School Age Program welcomes a diverse group of children both culturally and ethnically. The YMCA is committed to serving all families of varying backgrounds, learning rates, and learning styles. Children aged from 5 years to 13 years are served in our school age program.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Merrimack Valley YMCA admits children to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to the children and families of the YMCA. The YMCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, marital status, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, or sexual orientation,

nor because a person is a recipient of Federal, State, Public or Housing subsidy. We make every attempt at reasonable accommodations to ensure that we have the ability to meet the specific needs of every child.

SACC PLANNING and CURRICULUM

The Merrimack Valley YMCA is dedicated to developing spirit, mind, and body through programs which strengthen families, develop leadership in youth, promote healthy lifestyles, build international understanding and assist in community development. Our program is designed to both enrich and complement the child’s school experience. We strive to provide a safe and healthy environment. Our programs are staffed with capable sensitive, caring and energetic staff who understand children’s needs and who also take part in ongoing staff development and plan well organized, age appropriate activities and games.

School Age Child Care – Afternoon Daily Schedule

2:45–4:00PM:	Arrival, Snack and Homework
4:00–5:30PM:	Planned activities
5:30–6:00PM:	Open choices and closing time

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The YMCA School Age Program has an open door policy. Parents are allowed to visit the center at any time. We encourage parent participation on fieldtrips and other program events. Daily communication between parents and group leaders is important to us. Quality care depends on parents and staff working closely together. The daily schedule is posted to familiarize parents with their child’s daily classroom routines. Parents are always welcome to drop in and participate in activities at the center. Staff is always available to discuss your child’s specific needs and development. Also, to keep parents informed about the centers happenings, notices, and calendars are distributed to monthly and available through our website at www.mvymca.org. General information and reminders are posted throughout the program and on the parent bulletin board.



CHILDREN’S RECORDS REQUIRED

All children **MUST** have the appropriate forms submitted at the time of registration.

School Age Handbooks must be read and the statement signed indicating understanding of the policies and to them. A child’s parent(s) shall have the right to add information, comments, and data or any other relevant materials to the child’s record. Information contained in a child’s record will be privileged and confidential. Written parental consent to distribute/release a child’s file to an unauthorized person is necessary. A child’s parent(s) will have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child’s record.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

If your child complains of not feeling well, we will call you. The Site Coordinator will make a decision with you as to whether or not you will need to pick up your child. Any child who is sick will be placed in an area away from the other children until the parent(s) arrive. We will see to it that your child has adequate play material (i.e., book, puzzle, etc), ample rest, appropriate food and fluids until your arrival.

We will continue to work with our local board of health departments and will also follow the Department of Early Education and Care guidance regarding COVID exposures.

When a child or staff member are identified as a close contact we will follow the guidelines listed below:

- Quarantine for asymptomatic exposed children, regardless of where the exposure occurred, is no longer required. Children who are identified as close contacts may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic. Those who can mask should do so until Day 10. A test on Days 2 and 5 is recommended.
- Children who test positive must isolate for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free for 24 hours, they may return to programming after Day 5, provided:
 - If the child is able to mask, they must do so through Day 10.
 - If the child is unable to mask, they must have a negative test on Day 5 or later in order to return to programming prior to day 11.
 - If the symptomatic child cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and allowed to return to their program or school if they test negative, or they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have resolved, or if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis. A negative test is strongly recommended for return if the latter two conditions are met.

Your child will need to be picked up immediately if:

- He/She has a fever of 101 degrees or higher
- He/She vomits
- He/She has two or more bouts of diarrhea
- Any communicable diseases are identified (i.e. conjunctivitis, chicken pox, unidentified rashes, head lice, etc).

In any of these instances, your child **will not be allowed to return to the program** until they:

- are fever free for 24 hours;
- have not vomited in over 24 hours; and/or
- have not experienced diarrhea in 24 hours.

If a communicable disease **was the diagnosis**, a doctor's note must accompany the child upon return to the program and they must have been on medication for at least 24 hours before they return to the program. If a communicable disease **was not the diagnosis**, a doctor's note clearing the



child must accompany the child upon his/her return. In the event of an emergency, the child's parents will be notified first and if they are unable to be reached, the emergency contact people listed in your child's file will be contacted next. If no one can be reached, the family physician will be contacted. In case of an extreme/life-threatening emergency, we will call 911 for transportation to the hospital. The Site Coordinator or designee will accompany the child with the child's complete file. The staff must be aware of any allergies that your child may have.

TOOTH BRUSHING

SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

606 CMR 7.11 (11) (d) School age students will be assisted in brushing their teeth whenever they are in care for more than four hours. In the school age program, that will include the winter breaks and summer vacations. Upon registration, parents are responsible for purchasing a toothbrush for the child to keep in the program. Program is responsible for the toothpaste. Toothbrushes will be kept in child's individual bags. If a parent wishes to opt out of having their children brush their teeth while in the program they can sign an "Opt Out" form.

FIRST AID POLICY

If an injury occurs while your child is at the school age program, the following procedure will be followed by all staff:

Minor Accident/Injury

- First Aid is administered by a certified staff member
- An incident/injury report is prepared and logged into the Incident/Injury log
- The parent, site coordinator and School Age Director sign the report
- The report is filed in the child's file

Accident/Incident Requiring Medical Attention

- First Aid is administered by a certified staff member
- One staff calls 911 while another calls the parent
- The Site coordinator or designee accompany the child in the ambulance with his/her complete file
- An incident/injury report is prepared and logged into the Incident/Injury log
- The parent, site coordinator and School Age Director sign the report
- The incident/injury is logged into the Injury/Incident Log
- The report is filed into the child's file

It is YMCA policy to notify the parent(s) immediately of any head injury, no matter how minor. First Aid kits are to be kept in each room and carried with classrooms where they go (i.e., walks, playground, field trips, etc.). Supplies will include, but are not limited to, band-aids, ice packs, tweezers, triangular bandages, gauze pads, medical tape, scissors, wash and dry wipes, thermometers, and disposable gloves. It is the responsibility of the Site Coordinator to keep all First Aid Kits fully supplied. Location of First Aid Kits are labeled in each classroom and kept out of reach of children. Telephone numbers for local emergency services are posted near the telephone. Children's emergency information is also kept in a binder near the telephone in each classroom.

INJURY LOG STATEMENT

When first aid is administered to a child, an injury report is written by the staff member and put in the injury log. Injury log is kept in the SACC office. Injury log has the child's name, group, description of injury, date and time of injury, location where injury occurred, cause of injury and equipment involved. YMCA Site coordinator will contact the parent to let them know about their child's injury. Injury logs are reviewed often and discussed at monthly staff meetings to look for patterns of how/where accidents have occurred in the programs.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

The School Age Program policy is that **NO medication** will be administered without written parental authorization. All prescription medication will be administered only with the written order of a physician, which should include the label on the medication: a doctor's note should accompany this prescription medication. We will administer non-prescription (i.e., Tylenol, or medicated topical ointments) only with a signed authorization from the child's physician on the YMCA medical authorization form. A written record of administration of medication will be kept and will include the following information:

- Name of the child
- Time and date of each administration
- Dosage
- Name of staff administering medication

ALL medication shall be kept in its original container, with the child's name, name of medication and the directions for its administration and storage, or it **WILL NOT** be administered. All medication will be stored under proper conditions. **First Dose must be given by parent.**

All parents/guardians must fill out the authorization form before we will administer any medications. We will only administer medications for as long as indicated on the prescription label and on the physician's authorization form. We will keep in your child's file a record of the date, time and dosage of the medication, as well as the signature of the person who administered it. The Site Coordinator or his/her designee or any staff trained in the 5 rights to medication shall be the only one to administer medication. All unused medication will be returned to the parent.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

When a behavior management situation arises, our highly trained and educated staff will handle the situation in a consistent manner based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the child. Our goal is to maximize growth and development in a positive manner through setting reasonable and positive expectations, by planning activities and arranging the environment to channel energy for constructive purposes.

If a negative behavior is observed, our staff will try to redirect the behavior into a more positive action, and provide the child with the opportunity to verbalize their feelings. Expectations of the child will be made clear, and focus will be on the behavior and not the child themselves. The teacher will attempt to discuss the problem with the child and offer alternative choices in order to correct the behavior. If the situation has not been corrected, the child may be asked to leave the group or activity for some time away from the group. After this time the teacher will again try to redirect the child into more appropriate ways to communicate their needs. Choices are offered to encourage decision making and self-control through understanding. If a child has persistent behavioral issues, the teacher will keep a behavioral log for documentation purposes. Parents are kept informed of any issues or problems that

persist or behaviors that endanger the safety of the other children or staff in the program.

The Site Coordinator and staff will work together on a plan for helping the child handle any behavior issues and work towards a positive solution.

Aggressive and/or inappropriate behavior which endangers other children or a staff member is taken very seriously. Opportunities for parent's observations are scheduled as well as spontaneous conferences that will be strongly encouraged by the Site Coordinator. Corporal punishment, including spanking, will NOT be used. Children will not be denied food or force fed as a form of punishment. No child shall be subject to cruel or severe punishments, humiliation, or verbal, or any type of physical abuse. No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Our goal is to correct the problem and reinforce positive behavior. Children will assist in making rules whenever possible.

TERMINATION OR SUSPENSION POLICY

Aggressive or inappropriate behavior that endangers the safety of the children and/or staff or interferes with the group's enjoyment of activities will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to dismiss a child from the School Age Program if he/she continually refuses the guidance of staff to correct inappropriate behavior, inappropriate parent behavior, or chronic non-payment of fees/tuition. In cases of serious misbehavior, an incident report will be completed by a staff member and shared with the Site Coordinator and Parent(s) to discuss the child's behavior. In cases of serious injury to staff, child, or facility it is the policy of the School Age Program to suspend or terminate the child immediately. A conference will be held with the parent and the School Age Director to discuss the circumstances on allowing the child to return to the program.

It is the policy of the School Age Program that a child will be suspended from the program for a period of time of one to three days after three documented serious incidents. All incidents are recorded in the behavior log and a copy of the incident report put into the child's file. If serious misbehavior continues once the child returns to the program, it is the policy of the program to terminate the child. The Site Coordinator will assist the parent in finding a more suitable setting for the child if so requested.

Other possible reasons for termination or suspension include: overdue fees/tuition and chronic absenteeism. 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.

Bullying

The School Age Program believes that all students have a right to be in a safe environment. We will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving, verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling, and social isolation or manipulation. The School Age Educators will immediately report incidents of bullying to the Site Coordinator. Staff is expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to all students in the program. To ensure bullying does not occur at our School Age Programs, we provide our staff with developmentally appropriate training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to maintain a safe learning environment

Educators should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they don't endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are

subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Staff is responsible for ensuring that all children:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards
- Have use of all the equipment and space on an equal basis and equipment is in functioning condition.
- Are disciplined in a manner that is fair, equal, and respectful of them
- Are given the opportunity to express their emotions in an appropriate manner
- Are allowed to express their creativity and uniqueness
- Have an environment that offers them a variety of choices
- Are taught by people who care about them, enjoy being with them, and who are concerned about their growth and education

Our School Age Expectations for all of our Students are the Following

1. Respect yourself and others
2. Use words to solve your problems
3. Treat others the Way you Want to be treated
4. Smile, Be positive and have Fun



CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Children are responsible for the following:

- Their belongings
- Respecting the rules that are established for them
- 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

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

It is the YMCA's policy to admit children with disabilities to our program provided that the staff and facility can meet the needs of the child. With parental consent, the Site Coordinator will request an IEP if one is in place and information from the local education agency, Early Intervention, and the child's health/service providers. Parents must put their requests in writing if and when they want to change/modify their child's participation in the program, the size and staff/child ratio of the group to which their child is assigned, and the need for any physical equipment, material, or aids that the child may need. If the accommodations requested by the parents cause undue burden, a written notification will be sent to the parent within 30 days of receipt of request including the reasons for decision. The parent may contact the office for Early Education and Care (EEC) for determination of compliance. A copy of the notification will be kept in the child's file.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The School Age Program is required to inform all parents of their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission to the School Age program. Section 7.08 of 606 CMR the regulations that govern childcare centers contains more information as stated below:

(4) PARENT VISITS

The Licensee shall permit unannounced visits by the parents to the center and their child's room while their child is present.

(3) PARENT INPUT

The licensee shall have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of center policy and programs. The licensee shall provide an explanation to the parent(s) when a parent makes a suggestion as to the program or policy of the center and the licensee does not accept the suggestions. If the parent requests a written response, the licensee shall respond in writing to the parent.

(4) WRITTEN INFORMATION TO PARENTS

The licensee shall, annually but at least six months after child enrollment, prepare a written progress report of the participation of each child in the center's records. The licensee shall provide a copy of each report to the parent(s) or meet with them at least annually to discuss their child's activities and participation in the center. In addition:

- A. Program Calendars, noting closed days and hours of operations
- B. Licensee shall bring special problems or significant development to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

(5) PARENT CONFERENCES

The licensee shall make the staff available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

(6) NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

The staff shall inform parents immediately if:

- A. Any injury which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid and shall inform parents in writing of any first aid that was administered to their child within 24 hours of the incident.
- B. Immediately of any allegations of abuse or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the program.
- C. Any changes in Educators
- D. At the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administer
- E. In writing within 24 hours of any incident.
- F. Notify parents whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program.
- G. In writing of any changes in program policy or procedure.

7.06 PROGRESS REPORTS

The School Age Program will prepare a written report periodically documenting the progress of each child in the Program. The program will provide a copy of each report to the child's parent and a family night where progress report will be discuss with educators. Progress Reports serve a number of important purposes. They are an important tool in developing a partnership between educators and parents to

promote the child's growth and development; they can help the educators learn about each child they can be useful in planning activities to meet the needs of individual children and they form a useful record that can help the child and family transition more smoothly to another program or to another classroom. School Age progress report will be given annually. Student must be enrolled in the program at least six months or more to get a report.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REFERRALS

The YMCA will assist parents with referrals to the appropriate social, mental, health, educational, and medical services, including but not limited to dental checkups, vision or hearing screening for their child should the program staff feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child. Staff will notify the Site Coordinator if they feel a referral for services is necessary. Incidents will be recorded on the incident report sheets. Observations will be jotted down, dated and signed off by the staff person making the observation. These will be kept in the child's file. The Site Coordinator shall offer assistance to the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) in making the referral and shall have written parental consent before any referral is made.

The Site Coordinator will maintain a written record of referrals, including the parent conferences and results.

REFERRAL SERVICES

Through the Merrimack Valley YMCA collaboration with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we have information regarding social, mental health, educational and medical services including, but not limited to dental check-up, hearing and vision screening for families. Inquiries about the referral services should be made through the Site Coordinator. If the staff has a concern about a child, the behaviors will be observed, recorded, and reviewed by the Site Coordinator before a referral is recommended. A parent meeting will be set up to discuss the program's concerns and referral. The program shall offer any assistance to all parents making the referral and shall have written parental consent before any referral is made. The program shall maintain a written record of any referral, including the conferences with parents and the results.

Telephone Numbers

▪ DCF	978-557-2500
▪ Fuel Assistance	978-681-4950
▪ Lead Information	978-681-4995
▪ WIC Program	978-681-4960
▪ Child Care Circuit	978-686-4288
▪ Community Partnerships for Children	978-681-4996
▪ District Court	978-687-7184
▪ Department of Early Education and Care	978-740-3060
▪ Transitional Assistance	978-725-7100
▪ DA Victim Witness Program	978-683-4300
▪ Child Abuse	978-682-2688
▪ Head Start	978-681-4920
▪ Social Services	978-681-4985
▪ Welfare	800-322-1448
▪ Mental Health Center	978-683-3128
▪ Holy Family Doctor Referral Line	978-687-4000
▪ Lawrence General Hospital	978-683-4000
▪ Mass Eye & Ear	978-794-3439
▪ Mass Rehab	978-685-1731

- Lawrence School Dept. 978-975-5905
- Special Ed 978-975-5990
- Transverse Transportation 978-975-2777

Massachusetts EEC Licensors-

Michelle Haines
Phone: 978-826-1311
360 Merrimack Street
Building 9, 3rd floor
Lawrence, MA 01843

CLOTHING

Children at the YMCA are active and involved. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is seasonally appropriate and practical. Washable play clothes are preferred. Please label each article of clothing; this should include all outerwear and boots, bathing suit and towels. Also during summer months, we request that your child wear sandals with straps or sneakers and **NO FLIP-FLOPS**. We are not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please pack only the basic elements and mark **all clothing and personal belongings** clearly with your **child's first and last name**. Encourage your child to store his/her belongings in their backpacks. We are not responsible for misplaced items or items that are left behind. Please do not allow your child to bring in any toys and electronic materials from home into the classroom. We provide plenty of materials in our classrooms to engage all children. If your child has a special item that he/she would like to share with the class, please speak with your child's teacher about a show and tell opportunity.

SNACKS

The YMCA School Age Programs all serve a nutritious afternoon snack daily for the children. On full days, the Lawrence and Methuen branches of the YMCA provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack for the children. ***However, on full days in the Andover branch we only serve an afternoon snack. Parents must provide breakfast at home and bag a lunch for the child.*** **ALL of our facilities are nut free.** Menus are sent home each month with the children. If your child does not like the food on the menu, you can pack a lunch from home. Candy, soda, or junk foods are not allowed. We can heat up your child's food if necessary. We recommend that you use ice packs in lunches that contain food that may spoil. Please advise us if your child has a food allergy. This should be done in writing on the first day of participation.

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (HEPA)

First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) raised the call. The Y answered it. As part of our focus on developing healthy habits in kids, families, and our communities, we have committed to adopting standards for healthy eating and physical Activity (HEPA) in our child care programs. We are committed to making our programs healthy and fit but we need parent's help to do it.

As part of our commitment we will do the following:



1. **Family Engagement/Participation:** Provide open houses/family nights at least three times per year that focus on healthy habits including sharing of healthy recipes and physical activity ideas.
2. **Physical Activity:** Provide children with at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day for programs that run in the afternoon and 60 minutes a day for all day programs. This time will be spent participating in a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities. This play will take place outdoors whenever possible. As such, we ask that you dress your child accordingly.
3. **Digital Devices/Screen Time:** The use of television and movies is prohibited in our programs. Additionally, we will limit digital device time, such as the use of computers and tablets, solely for the use of homework and/or programs that engage children in physical activity (such as WII Fit) and it will not exceed one hour limit.
4. **Food/Nutrition:** We will serve fruits and/or vegetables at all meals and snacks. We will also serve all meals family style, meaning that each child will serve themselves with limited help from adults. We will not serve, nor will we allow fried foods in our programs. Please refrain from bringing fried foods into our program. Water will be accessible to children at all times and will be present and at the table during all meals. Sugar sweetened beverages are not allowed in our program.

This includes holidays and parties.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

The Site Coordinator provides a monthly newsletter or calendar updating any closures and upcoming events. These are available on our website at www.mvymca.org for your convenience. They are also located in the program bulletin boards. Please check your child's classroom bulletin boards daily for changes and new information. A curriculum bulletin board is also available at each program.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND FIELDTRIPS

Throughout the year, we invite special guests to talk about important topics such as bullying and we also participate in periodic field trips. The field trips we schedule are based on the interest of the children and may be incorporated into the theme of the curriculum. Parent chaperones are strongly encouraged and appreciated.

Parents who have a unique interest, talent, or skill are invited to share their knowledge in the classroom. If you would like to help out in the classroom please speak to your child's teacher. In the event your child is injured or falls ill on a field trip, the site coordinator will first attempt to notify you and then move on to emergency contacts listed in child's file. Minor injuries will be tended to by an educator that is certified in first aid utilizing equipment from the YMCA First Aid kits. An accident report will be filled out stating how the injury occurred and how it was treated. If life threatening emergencies arise, 9-1-1 will be called and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital accompanied by the Site Coordinator or his/her designee.

UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

Any activities that are not directly related to childcare, such as fund-raising, publicity events, media interviews, and photographs must have written parental authorization. At times, it is possible that a student or staff member might be observing or doing research on the program participants with consent of the Site Coordinator. Children will not be part of this without written consent of the parent. No

interactions shall take place between child and observer, no physical harm to the child shall be incurred, and the child (ren) will not be identified.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All School Age Educators are mandated reporters under the Massachusetts State Law. Any staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is obligated to report the information immediately to the Site Supervisor or other designee. The person receiving the initial report will be responsible for assessing the data collected and the condition of the child. The parents will then be notified verbally and a written 51A report will be filed with the Department of Children and Families Protective Services Unit as required by law. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the staff, the staff will be removed from providing care to children pending an investigation and the Department of Early Education and Care will also be notified. Reinstatement of the staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of DCF, EEC, and the YMCA along with any other investigative agency. It is also the policy of the YMCA that staff is not permitted to baby-sit, transport, or be involved with children who are program participants outside of the program.

STRATEGIES TO HELP PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

The YMCA has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out applicants not suited for working with children. The YMCA will take any allegations or suspicion of child abuse seriously. Staff understands their legal obligations to report suspected abuse. Staff members understand what practices may be considered abusive and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch. Defense strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations. Staff members protect themselves and the YMCA by agreeing not to be alone with YMCA youth or program participants outside of the YMCA programs or facility at any time. These preventive strategies are designed to protect the children in YMCA programs and to protect the YMCA staff and volunteers from being wrongly accused of incidences of child abuse.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the interests of working families, the Merrimack Valley YMCA School Age Programs will be open most snow days. Parents are advised that the program may have a delayed opening. In cases of extreme weather, parents should confirm the program opening time with the Site Coordinator. In all instances, we put weather bulletins on our website and on Facebook. Like us on Facebook and receive updates. In the event of an early dismissal, the Site Coordinator will call all parents to pick up their children. If the YMCA decides the need to close due to extreme weather conditions, an announcement will be made on local radio stations, www.mvymca.org, Twitter and Facebook. There are no make-up days for cancellations. No credit or refund is given for snow days, holidays, vacation weeks or no school days. Please call your local YMCA if you are unsure of an inclement weather event.

EVACUATIONS

In the event that the building must be evacuated, the children will be guided out through the nearest exit. Each classroom and activity room that the children use has an emergency exit map listing the exit route. Group Leaders take their classroom rosters and children's emergency information binder with them at every evacuation so that they may account for all children when safely outside and away from the building. The Site Coordinator or his/ her designee will check through the classrooms to make sure everyone is out. Fire and evacuations drills are practiced monthly with the children and staff.

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

1. Fire, Natural Disaster, or Situation (i.e., Chemical Spill, bomb threat)

Evacuation plans are posted near all exits. The one teacher from each classroom takes the attendance book, sign in/out book, first aid bag and emergency binder with them. In inclement weather, we may bring the children to a designated indoor facility. Please ask your Site Coordinator for the designated meeting place for your child's program.

If evacuation is to be for an extended period of time, parents will be called and asked to pick up the children. YMCA front desk staff will know where the children have been taken. A staff person would remain near the Preschool to direct parents to their children. If parents cannot be reached, then all emergency contacts will be tried.

2. HOSTILE INTRUDER(S) EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

- Emergency is declared. Alert staff over walkies and page system of hostile intruder. 911 is called. Staff should begin lockdown.
- Each staff member is responsible for the children in their care at that moment
- If you are able to evacuate children safely, initiate evacuation procedures. If not, begin lockdown.
- Close and lock inside doors. Direct children to sit in an area away from windows and door. Have first aid kit with you.
- If doors do not lock: Barricade yourself in the room with furniture or anything you can push against the door.
- Lock the window and close blinds or curtains.
- Stay away from windows.
- Turn all lights and audio equipment off. Silence all cell phones and put on vibrate.
- Try to stay calm and be as quiet as possible.
- Do Not open the door unless first responder has been identified.
- Do not sound the fire alarm. A fire alarm would signal the occupants in the rooms to evacuate the building and thus place them in potential harm as they attempted to exit.

3. Power Outage

In the event of a power outage, our first step is to call the Electric Company to find out what the problem is and how long they anticipate the outage to be. If it is for 2 hours or less, we will continue to operate. If the power outage were to be longer than 2 hours, we would call parents and ask them to pick up their children.

If the telephone service is lost, there is a cellular phone available. Fire alarms and Emergency lights are on a battery back-up power system. They keep a charge up to 8 hours.

4. Loss of Heat

If heat loss is for a short period of time (2 hours or less) we will use the gross motor space to keep children active. We would be sure they wore coats and other outdoor gear if necessary. If the heat loss is for an extended period of time and the entire site, parents will be called to pick up their children. In the event that the loss of heat is only affecting a few rooms or partial location of site, children will be moved to another location in the building with operating heat that is licensed by EEC. An example of another on site location would be another age group classroom.

5. Loss of Water

If the water loss were for a short period of time, we would go to YWCA for use of toilets and hand-washing. If the water loss were for an extended period of time, parents would be called to pick up their children.

6. General

In the event that a hurricane, blizzard or state of emergency is predicted, we would close Preschool for the day. If blizzard conditions develop during the day, we would call parents and arrange for early closing.

Closures are called in to WCCM radio station (AM 800). If an emergency situation could extend into a second day, parents would be advised to listen to the radio or call the YMCA for further information. The safety of all children and staff would be top priority.





Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding of the Merrimack Valley YMCA School Age Child Care Handbook

I have received and understand the following policies and procedures:

- ☐ Transportation Policy
- ☐ Late Pick up
- ☐ Transition Policy
- ☐ Non-Discrimination Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety Policy
- ☐ Tooth brushing
- ☐ Emergency First Aid Policy
- ☐ Medication Administration Policy
- ☐ Behavioral Management Procedures
- ☐ Termination and Suspension Policy
- ☐ Bullying Policy
- ☐ Children's Right and Responsibility
- ☐ Parental Rights
- ☐ Progress Report
- ☐ Snack and Lunch Policy
- ☐ Waiver of Liability Snack and Lunch Policy

Parent Signature

Date

Parent name (printed)



Merrimack Valley YMCA
360 Merrimack Street Suite 270
Lawrence, MA 01843
978-725-6681

www.mvymca.org