



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# West Suburban YMCA Out-of-School Time Program

276 Church St.  
Newton, Ma 02458  
617-244-6050

## Family Handbook 2023-2024





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## **WSYMCA MISSION STATEMENT**

The West Suburban YMCA, a charitable non-profit organization, strengthens the foundations of our community by supporting youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility for all. The West Suburban YMCA, founded in 1877 in Newton Corner, is among the oldest YMCAs in the United States.

Our staff and volunteers deliver on our cause to strengthen the community. Whether we are building confidence in children, encouraging someone to achieve a health goal, or bringing people from different backgrounds together to improve neighborhoods, every connection made contributes to a better "us."

When you join the Y you belong to a place where:

- Families find a safe, positive environment for children to learn values, social skills and behaviors.
- Families come together to have fun and spend quality time with each other.
- Adults connect with friends, pursue interests and learn how to live healthier.
- Communities thrive because neighbors support each other and give back.
- We all build relationships that further our sense of belonging and purpose.

Our promise to you, as you walk in the door, is to find "your fit" with the activities, facilities, and programs that we offer. We offer the resources and the flexibility to help you, your family, and the community to be healthier, happier and more connected.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE**

We believe that children learn and grow best within the context of their family, cultural background, and community, and in a setting that is safe, comfortable, and active. Our environment is inspiring where children can learn, play, and grow while developing self-esteem, social-emotional, cognitive, physical, artistic, and creative development. Children are encouraged to help create their own niche within the Out of School Time program community. Emphasis is placed on the four core values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. Staff, children, and parents are expected to model the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, ensuring that everyone puts their best selves forward every day. Our commitment is to make a difference in the lives of every child and family who choose the Y. The Y's assurance of high quality includes:

- Learning experiences that are engaging and developmentally appropriate.
- Focus on social emotional growth.
- Active play and physical fitness combined with nutrition education.
- Emphasis on self-confidence, self-esteem, and leadership, while encouraging independence.
- Experienced, well trained teaching staff
- Warm, positive interactions between educators and children
- Parent involvement

The major objective of the YMCA is to strengthen and support family life. Our program is an ideal way to accomplish this objective. All those involved play a role in the process of care and development. The YMCA does not intend to become a substitute parent. Parents, caregivers,

children and other family members all play an important and vital role in caring for and facilitating the development of your child and in strengthening and supporting your family.



## **Objective of the Out-of-School Time Program**

The YMCA Out-of-School Time program is committed to serving a wide variety of families without regard to race, creed, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, family lifestyle, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or financial ability.

- Provide a loving, caring, enthusiastic, creative, safe atmosphere for all children.
- Provide a safe space where children can play, learn and develop relationships.
- Develop a proactive behavior management model by providing stimulating program activities and recognizing positive behaviors and choices.
- Provide an effective balance of active and creative after school activities with time for relaxation.
- Develop a quality out of school program with a well-planned curriculum which includes the following components:
  - Active Games and Sports
  - Creative Activities
  - Community Service
  - Nutrition and Fitness

We are committed to nurturing individual differences and the growth of the whole child.

Our philosophy is a developmental one. To meet individual needs and to give equal emphasis to all aspects of development, our program is structured to provide access to materials which help each child develop to his/her highest potential. Opportunities are presented which encourage the child to make decisions and to take responsibility.

Positive peer interaction, cooperation, development of self-respect, self-control, and friendships based on mutual caring and respect are some of our main goals for the development of each child's social competence.

Each child's emotional needs are important to us. Our staff realize the importance of consistency, security, warmth, and love and try to foster this kind of atmosphere in order that each child can develop his/her emotional capabilities. The development of healthy self-esteem, independence and self-regulation are among our primary emotional goals.

We know that children learn best by exploring their environment, by being exposed to a variety of "hands on" experiences, and by being allowed to figure out their world through trial and error. Our staff understands their responsibility to set limits, to maintain safety and to act as role models who generate love, respect, understanding and generosity. Staff communicate to the children their expectations regarding values, acceptable social behaviors, and respect for the environment.

The West Suburban YMCA Out-of-School Time program shall not discriminate in providing service to children and their families based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, toileting status, marital status, or sexual orientations.

## **BUILDING CHARACTER...ONE CHILD AT A TIME**

The YMCA is committed to incorporating character development as the foundation of everything we do. By instilling in our children, the importance of values such as *Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility*, we are providing them with the tools and self-esteem necessary to make healthy decisions in life.



*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 afterschool programming:*

### **Availability of EEC Regulations:**

The Center maintains copies of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Childcare 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 Preschool and Family Services Director.

All Early Childhood Education Programs are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and are mandated to uphold all rules, regulations and policies set by EEC. Information regarding programs' regulatory compliance history can be obtained from the Department of Early Education and Care.

### **Metro Boston**

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North Quincy, MA 02169  
Phone: (617) 472-2881  
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## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Children's Rights:**

Children are treated with care, respect, and honesty always; enjoy an environment that is safe and free of hazards; have the opportunity to express their feelings and be heard in an appropriate manner whether they are happy, angry, frustrated, or excited. No child shall be subjected to any abuse, neglect or corporal punishment including but not limited to any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, punishments which subject a child to verbal abuse, ridicule or humiliation, denial of rest or bathroom facilities, punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet or any punishment related to eating or not eating food.

### **Child Guidance:**

Exhibiting and teaching respect is the foundation of the YMCA's Child Guidance Policy. Children are encouraged to show respect for each other and each other's property and the Y facility in the interest of every child's safety and the security of the group.

The Out-of-School Time staff employs positive strategies and tactics that are consistent, age-appropriate, and respect the individuality of every child. These include:

- Establishing predictable daily routines.
- Helping children learn social, communication and emotional skills in place of challenging behaviors.
- Intervening quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and teaching them alternatives for conflict resolution.
- Allowing children to help set rules and procedure for interactions with each other so they better understand the why behind policies that are in place.
- Encouraging children to be part of the solution in problem solving.

If a child displays negative behaviors (throwing toys, hitting children, etc.) a staff member will talk to the child about making better choices. If the child repeats the behavior, the staff member may ask the child to make a different choice, possibly in a different area of the classroom.



The staff will never use any form of physical or verbal abuse, punishment, or humiliation; nor deny a child meal, drinks, outdoor time, or the use of bathroom facilities.

A staff member may supportively hold a child in the rare case of an emergency where a dangerous threat to the child, or others near the child, exists. Staff may hold the child long enough to remove the child from the situation. All staff provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development.

### **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 outs 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.
- No confinement to a chair, or any other piece of equipment for an extended period in lieu of supervision.

### **Staff Responsibilities for Child Guidance:**

One of the staff's many roles is to introduce children to a social environment and guide them in understanding appropriate behaviors. The following guidelines are used:

- All educators in the Out-of-School Time program serve as role models.
- Staff will handle inappropriate behaviors in a calm, clear and consistent manner based on the child's development level.
- All behavior concerns will be logged in a behavior log.
- Parents will be kept informed of their child's behavior and progress.

### **Children's Responsibility:**

Children of all ages are expected to model the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, ensuring that everyone puts their best selves forward every day. This includes (but is not limited to): understanding the consequences of their actions; sharing; controlling their anger; participating in activities; wearing seatbelts while in a Y vehicle (and stay seated during bussing/transportation) and respecting and following the Y's rules and policies.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND REGISTRATION**

### **Registration and Admission:**

Enrollment is ongoing until the program is full. For a child to enroll in the Out-of-School Time Program they need to:

- Attend Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.



- Have a current West Suburban YMCA Youth or Family membership and maintain throughout enrollment in the program.
- Complete Out-of-School Time registration/enrollment packet.
- Submit a non-Refundable \$200 deposit payment, which goes towards their first month's tuition.
- Submit a current physical date no later than 12 months from enrollment. (physical must always remain current while child is enrolled).
- Submit a copy of your child's current immunizations.
- Submit a current copy of IEP or 504 plan at the time of registration. (Please note that a meeting or phone conversation will be planned with the Director of OST and the Director of Preschool and Family Services before the beginning of the school year to discuss your child's plan for success.)
- **If your child has an allergy or chronic illness an Individual Health Care Form is required before your child can start in the program.**

**Note that this documentation is required by the Department of Early Education and Care through the State of Massachusetts, and your child may not start the program until obtained.**

Enrollment in our program is open to all; we do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, marital status, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

Financial assistance opportunities are available and can be applied for on a confidential basis. We also accept Massachusetts EEC Vouchers. Please speak with the Director of Out-of-School Time or the Director of Preschool and Family Services for more information.

#### **Registration/Enrollment Packet:**

The following forms are included in the registration/enrollment packet. It is particularly important that they be completed in detail because they provide the staff with valuable information about your child. These forms must be updated annually or whenever circumstances change.

Please remember to let us know immediately whenever there are changes to your information. Children will not be considered enrolled in the program unless all paperwork and deposit are received. **Forms included**

#### **in the registration/enrollment packet are:**

- Registration Form
- Child File Enrollment Form
- Emergency Contacts and Pick-Up Authorization
- Developmental History
- Authorization and Consent Form
- Child's Medical Form (or physical and immunizations dated within one-year)
- Individual Health Care Plan **(applicable if your child has an allergy or chronic illness, etc.)**
- Medication Consent Form **(needed for any medication your child will take while in program)**

#### **Billing Policies:**

The Y's attention to quality care for every child includes an equal responsibility by parents/guardians to uphold the fee schedule agreed upon during Registration.

The Y's financial guidelines include:

- Rates are charged weekly and are not reduced for weeks containing holidays; closures due to inclement weather; or when a child is absent or suspended (there are no refunds or credits).
- For the 2022-2023 school year, parents will be charged the Monday of the week before starting on September 14<sup>th</sup> and up to the last Monday of the school year. The WSYMCA reserves the right to suspend any child if payment is more than thirty days late. Parents will be notified by a "hand





delivered” letter if tuition payment is late. Parents have until the 25th of the month from this hand delivered letter to pay or child will not be allowed to attend program for the following month. Child(ren) will be welcome to participate in the program when the balance is paid in full and if space is available. Please be aware that if your child is suspended from the program, his/her space will become available to other children on the waitlist.

- Any additional charges included but not limited to late pick-ups, extra days of care, will be added to the following weeks bill.
- Participants need to have a current West Suburban YMCA Youth or Family Membership, which must remain current while enrolled in the program. When withdrawing from the OST Program, families are responsible for cancelling their Youth or Family Membership at the Welcome Center Desk.
- Parents using vouchers must keep them current. If your voucher expires your weekly fee will be reassessed and parents will be responsible for the full payment of the new fee.
- Parents must notify the Y two weeks in advance if they are withdrawing a child from the program, otherwise they will be liable for payment.

### **Registration or Schedule Changes:**

Any changes in registration/enrollment information should be updated immediately with the Director of Out-of-School Time and the Director of Preschool and Family Services, especially changes to cell phone, home or workplace numbers, emails, home addresses, emergency contacts or medical information.

When changing a child’s schedule, a parent/guardian must fill out a “Change of Schedule Form” or send an e-mail and submit it to the Director of Out-of-School Time and the Director of Preschool and Family Services, who will then submit it to the registrar. **You must provide a two-week notice for any changes related to your child’s schedule including adding days (based on availability), dropping days, or cancelling program.** *Accommodation will be made space permitting for anyone wishing to add days.*

### **Termination or Suspension of Service:**

- **Suspension** – Child remains enrolled in program but is suspended from attending for a period of time. Full program payment still applies.
- **Termination** – Child is unenrolled from program and their position on the attendance log becomes vacated for another child to enroll.

Unfortunately, there are circumstances that necessitate the suspension or termination of program services. If a child behaves in a way that jeopardizes the safety, health and/or well-being of him/herself, another child or staff member, the Y reserves the right to suspend or terminate program service immediately. Suspensions may range from one to five days and termination of service may be for several months based on the severity of behavior or offense. Reasons for suspension/termination from the program include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate behavior considered harmful or threatening to your child, staff, or others
- Inappropriate parent behavior toward a child, staff or other parent(s)
- Chronic absenteeism
- Chronic tardiness of parent at pick-up
- Overdue fees
- See Code of Conduct in Appendix A

The Y staff will first attempt all appropriate methods of positive child guidance and/or progressive methods of discipline before imposing a suspension or termination. The Director of Out of School Time and/or the



Director of Preschool and Family Services may recommend additional supportive services or make a referral for services when deemed appropriate. We may seek support from your child's school counselor or teacher as well. All incidents and subsequent actions will be documented in the child's file.

If a child is suspended or terminated, the Director of Out-of-School Time and/or the Director of Preschool and Family Services will provide the parent/guardian with all relevant information, including the circumstances under which a child may return, if applicable.

At any point during the disciplinary process, parents/guardians have the right to request an appeal. The appeal must be made in writing to the Director of Preschool and Family Services, with a request to meet and discuss the offense in further detail.

In all cases, the final disciplinary decision is made in consultation with the Director of Out-of-School Time, the Director of Preschool and Family Services and/or the Senior Director of Association Programming and/or the Chief Operating Officer.

### **Reinstatement after Termination:**

Standing by our commitment to nurture individual differences and the growth of the whole child, we understand children sometimes make undesirable choices. If after 2 months of termination, the parents/guardians feel their child's behavior has been corrected, they can request to meet and discuss reinstatement. A request to meet must be done in writing with the following information.

1. Addressed to the Director of Preschool and Family Services
2. Reason the parent/guardian feels their child should be reinstated.
3. 1 reference (non-family) that has witnessed desirable behavior over the time period since termination (teacher, counselor, care giver.)

If the OST program has an opening, the Director of Preschool and Family Services will contact you and set up a meeting to discuss reinstatement. Please note, the OST program has a lengthy waiting list and once a child has been terminated, we will fill that vacancy with a child from a waiting family. If OST is full when the reinstatement request is received, all families are welcome to re-enroll in the program the following year.

## **PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Hours of Operation:**

The Out-of-School Time program opens 3:00PM for drop off (12:20PM on early release days) and closes promptly at 6:00PM. All children must be picked up by an authorized person by 6:00PM. Children enrolled in the program picked up later than 6:00PM will be assessed a late fee.

Children enrolled in the program will be dropped off and picked up from the program by a parent/guardian or authorized adult designated in the child's file.

The Out of School Time program also offers vacation camps during Newton Public School Closings such as winter vacation. Several Holiday Vacation Camp Days and Snow Day Camps are available throughout the year. These are subject to change based on whether they can be safely run.



### **Late Pick-Up Policy:**

It is expected that children will be picked up no later than the posted program closing time of 5:00 p.m. Recognizing that there may be unintended delays, parents must call the program with an expected arrival time and/or alternative pick-up plan. Late pick-ups are assessed a late fee of \$10 for any portion of being 10 minutes late per child and \$1.00 per minute/per child after 10 minutes. The late fee will be added to your monthly tuition bill for the following month. If a parent is 2 hours late after closing and contact cannot be made with a parent or emergency contact, the staff will notify the Department of Children and families (DCF) Emergency Unit, and follow the instructions provided by DCF. Chronic lateness could result in suspension or termination from the program, as determined by the OST Director and Director of Preschool and Family Services.

### **Attendance:**

If a child is going to be absent from the program, the parent/guardian must notify the Director of Out-of-School Time and the Director of Preschool and Family Services. Program fees are required for all days your child is registered to attend the Out-of-School Time program. Rates are charged weekly and are not reduced for weeks containing holidays, closures due to inclement weather, or when a child is absent or suspended (there are no refunds or credits).

### **Transportation:**

Children enrolled in the program can arrive at the YMCA in a variety of ways; by YMCA van, by YMCA contracted bus, parent, by YMCA staff accompanied walking, contracted by parent delivery service. The YMCA van is driven by a licensed YMCA employee. There is YMCA staff members monitoring the school buses.

### **Staff:**

Staff are selected carefully based on their experience, education, talents, and interpersonal skills. Staff training is continuous, timely, and comprehensive on topics that include Academic Instruction, Curriculum Development, Bullying Prevention, Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Safety and Protection; Family Engagement and strategies to promote children's social and emotional growth.

Criminal and Sexual (CORI/SORI) background checks are run on all staff and must have current certificates in First Aid and CPR.

### **Curriculum:**

The Out-of-School Time program encourages all children to participate in activities which promote the child's social, emotional, cognitive, physical, artistic and creative development. After school hours children will participate in traditional after-school activities. The activities are designed to meet the needs for recreation, cultural enrichment, group and individual time, homework assistance, community service, physical fitness and creative expression. All activities are designed to be developmentally appropriate for the children enrolled in the program. Our programs utilize both the indoor facilities (OST rooms, Recreation Center, auditorium) and outdoor facilities (track, field, and playground). The program focuses on the development of independence and responsibility in children by encouraging opportunities for decision making.



Sample Daily Schedule	
1:15pm	Arrival / Wash Hands ( <i>Wednesday only</i> )
1:20pm - 2:00pm	Lunch ( <i>Wednesday only</i> )
2:00pm - 2:30pm	Free Play ( <i>Wednesday only</i> )
2:30pm - 3:00pm	Arrival / Wash Hands ( <i>M, T, Th, F</i> ) & Homework Help
3:00pm - 3:30pm	Snack
3:30pm - 4:00pm	Physical Activity / Outdoor Time
4:00pm - 4:45pm	Clubs
4:45pm - 5:15pm	Enrichment Activity
5:15pm - 5:45pm	Board Games / Coloring
5:45pm - 6:00pm	Clean-up and Dismissal

### **Swim, Sports, Creative Arts, and Fitness Lessons:**

Children enrolled in the OST program can sign up for swimming, sports, creative arts, and fitness lessons and staff will escort them to and from their lesson. Parents must inform the OST staff in writing of any classes their child is registered for. Children will be transported to and from class by an OST staff member.

Parents/guardians must pick up their child from an OST staff member and not directly from the class due to our child safety policies.

### **Pick Up Authorization:**

A Pick-Up Authorization Form, identifying individuals allowed to pick up a child from our program, must be on file for every child registered in the Out-of-School Time program (it is a requirement of enrollment and a DEEC regulation). If a child is picked up by anyone other than a previously designated individual, the program must be notified in writing of the change. No child will be allowed to leave the premises without an authorized adult. **Unfamiliar authorized adults who pick up are required to show identification.**

Authorized individuals must be 18 years of age or older. If staff have a concern that an authorized adult, including a parent/guardian, is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, staff will contact another authorized adult for pick up. Incidents of this type may be reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

### **Toys from Home/Electronics:**

We ask that children do not bring toys from home or electronics (cellphone, iPod, iPad, tablet) that are not required for accommodations. The day's activities are full and engaging, and there are many items for recreational play and learning in our classrooms. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or broken toys/items that a child brings from home.

### **Inclement Weather Policy:**

In the event of inclement weather (, snow, etc.), we will make every effort to remain open during our regularly scheduled hours. However, if the safety of our staff or our members is in question, we may close



the building and/or cancel programs. Please check the West Suburban YMCA website or call the front desk for updates on hours of operation and if we are open during inclement weather.

### **Scheduled Program Closures:**

September 4 – Labor Day	November 23 and 24 –	March 29 - Good Friday
September 25 – Yom Kippur (Possible Holiday Day Camp)	Thanksgiving Break	April 15 - Patriots Day
October 9 – Indigenous People’s Day	December 25 – Christmas Day	May 27 - Memorial Day
November 10 – Veteran’s Day Observed	January 1 – New Year’s Day	June 19 - Juneteenth
	January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr., Day	
	February 19 – President’s Day	

### **Fundraising:**

The YMCA is a charitable organization and does various fundraising activities and events throughout the year. We encourage all families to participate. Thank you in advance for your support.

### **HEPA Standards: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity:**

The Y is expanding its longtime commitment to children and youth by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards. The standards we are adopting will build a healthier future for our nation’s children by providing healthy environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Specifically, these standards are:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs.
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options.
- Limit the amount of screen time (use of computers, watching TV or videos)
- Commit Y’s to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.

The Y serves food and beverages that promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease. These include minimally processed foods made with whole grains and heart healthy fats and oils and without added sugars or Trans fats; fruits, vegetables, and beverages made without added sugars. Nutrition education is included in our curriculum for all ages, and we create an environment that encourages children to choose healthy foods. Water is available throughout the day.

### **Meals:**

We provide each child with a healthy afternoon snack and ask families to provide a healthy lunch for your child on half days. Water is always available for children throughout the day. Parents are welcome to provide an additional snack from home, but all snacks and food must be **peanut and tree nut free**. The program is unable to refrigerate, or heat children’s lunches so please include an ice pack if needed and use a thermos to keep food warm. Children are not allowed to use the vending machines during program hours. We do not allow children or parents to order food and have it delivered.

Children’s lunch including snacks are required to be healthy. Sugary drinks and sugary snacks are prohibited. Please refrain from sending soda, candy and fried snacks like chips. See below list.



Pasta	Quesadilla	Pasta salad
Soup	Vegetables (cut up)	Egg salad
Pizza	Fruit	Cheese and crackers
Cereal	Yogurt	Cheese sticks
Sandwiches	Applesauce	Granola bars
Bagels	Humus	

If your child has food allergies, please notify the Director of Out-of-School Time and the Director of Preschool and Family Services at the time of enrollment and signify this on the appropriate space on the child’s registration/enrollment packet. We will make every effort to satisfy the special needs of all children. The staff require all children to sit at a table while eating.

## PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Children’s Records:**

Information in a child’s record is privileged and confidential, meaning that the Y will not release information contained in the record to anyone not related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian requests access to the child’s record or specific information contained within the file, the Y will provide requested information within two (2) business days of the initial request. The YMCA follows the Department of Early Education and Care guidelines governing access to, duplication and dissemination of such information. The Y also documents to whom and for what reason information in the record was released. This documentation is available to parent/guardian and program staff responsible for record keeping. *Authorized representatives from the MA Department of Early Education & Care, Department of Public Health and the Department of Children & Families have the right to review all records for regulatory or intervention purposes.*

### **Special Accommodations:**

The Y will consider special accommodation requests to meet the specific needs of a child, including change or modification in the child’s participation in regular activities. Identification of special equipment, materials, ramps or aids will be reviewed and discussed. It is the goal of the Y to work with each family in an effort to serve every child; however, if such accommodation creates an undue burden on the program, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing regarding the Y’s inability to serve the child and the reasons for the decision. Parents have the right to contact the Department of Early Education and Care to review any such decision.

### **Referral Services:**

Through the Y’s connections with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we are linked to information and services regarding social, mental health, educational and medical services for families. The Director of Preschool and Family Services maintains this referral information. When needed, the Y provides parents/guardians with a document detailing the reasons



that referral services are being recommended for a child. This will include observations related to the child and the efforts made by the Y program to accommodate the child's needs. The Y requires written parental/guardian consent before a referral is made, so it is important for all to work together. The program maintains a written record of any referrals, including conferences with parents and any results or actions discussed.

### **Parent Engagement:**

The Y encourages parent/guardian participation and feedback. Individual conferences can be arranged by appointment. If you have a specific concern, question, program suggestion, etc., please contact the Director of Out-of-School Time.

### **Incident Reports:**

If a child exhibits a pattern of negative behavior, staff may ask a parent to sign off on an incident report. The main purpose of incident reports is to be a communication tool between families and staff. In the event that 3 or more behavioral incident reports have been sent home or the staff feels the child's behavior threatens his/her safety or the safety of others, the Director of Out-of-School Time and the Director of Preschool and Family Services may ask the parent/guardian to meet to discuss how to help that child be successful in the program.

The Out-of-School Time program reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child for unsafe and/or threatening behavior with or without advanced notice to the family, depending on the severity of the behavior.

Should a pattern of negative behavior occur, the Director of Out-of-School Time may do any of the following to avoid the child being suspended or terminated from the program:

- Provide a chance to meet with the parents to discuss other options than suspension or termination.
- Offer a list of referrals to parent/guardian for an evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services.
- Pursue options for a supportive service to the program.
- Develop a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

## **YMCA CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The West Suburban YMCA reviews all prospective staff, members and guests through the Massachusetts Registry of Sex offenders and prohibits membership or access to our Y's for individuals who are classified as offenders. In addition, fingerprinting is required of all staff who work regularly with children in Y Programs.

### **Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention:**

Education and awareness are central to the Y's commitment to keeping children safe. The following strategies are consistently adhered to in our afterschool program for the protection of children, educators and volunteers:

- All educators, branch staff and volunteers participate in mandatory annual training to help identify the signs of potential child abuse (physical and sexual), between adults and children and among children. Policies are in place to avoid situations where children may become vulnerable.
- Communication is open and honest among educators, parents and children. Children are encouraged to speak up in any situation where they may feel uncomfortable, regardless of the reason. Parents are encouraged to share behaviors that are out of the ordinary.
- Providing children with affection is important to their emotional and social growth, but there are boundaries and staff recognize every child's need for personal space. Side hugging, pats on the back and high-fives are all acceptable ways for staff to show warmth and encouragement. At no time will





the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding bathroom privileges, confining children in locked rooms, verbal, or emotional abuse.

- Parents may visit, unannounced, any program in which their child is enrolled.
- Y policy further prohibits educator/child interaction outside of a Y program (i.e. babysitting, Facebook friendships, texting, or phone calls.)

### **Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse (Commonly referred to as filing a 51A):**

All YMCA staff are required under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51 A, to report incidents of neglect or abuse—physical, sexual and psychological—to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). This is not discretionary. Educators will file a 51A whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been harmed by anyone, including non-family members. In the most grievous instances, the matter may be referred directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney. In the event of an accusation or suspicion of child abuse, the following protocol is activated:

1. The staff person will notify the Director of Out-of-School Time and/or the Director of Preschool and Family Services who will review the incident with the Senior Director of Association Programming and/or the Chief Operating Officer. All pertinent information is collected and assessed.
2. Once all pertinent information is secured, the Director of Out-of-School Time and/or the Director of Preschool and Family Services will notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Protective Services Unit. A written 51A Report must be filed within 48 hours (about 2 days) of the incident. If a YMCA staff person or other staff has been named in the 51A Report, the Department of Early Education and Care; Department of Public Health or another appropriate regulatory agency will be notified.
3. If a staff person, other staff, or volunteer is implicated, without exception, the individual will be removed from direct care responsibilities immediately and will stay removed until all investigating authorities have completed their review. A positive finding will result in immediate termination. Reinstatement of an accused staff member or volunteer will occur only after investigation is complete and allegations are cleared and dismissed to the satisfaction of the Director of Out-of-School Time and/or the Director of Preschool and Family Services and the Senior Director of Association Programming and/or the Chief Operating Officer.
4. No YMCA administrator or director has the authority to supersede the protocol for reporting.
5. The parents or legal guardians of the child(ren) involved in an alleged incident will be notified in accordance with the directions set forth by DCF.
6. Information maintained in the handling of all 51A filings is considered confidential and privileged.

## **HEALTH CARE POLICY**

The following processes safeguard children and staff from spreading communicable illnesses. The protection of every child's health and wellness is a priority; therefore; though some of these restrictions may be inconvenient, they have been proven to be effective in containing the transmission of common childhood ailments. The full health care policy is available upon request.

### **Children should remain home:**

If he/she is listless, unusually irritable, complains of aches, pale or flushed. In particular, the child cannot attend programming with any of the following symptoms:

- Earache
- Fever over 100 Degrees
- Sore Throat
- Stomachache
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Contagious Rash





- Head Lice
- COVID-19, RSV, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, Conjunctivitis,

Impetigo.... any condition deemed contagious.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the Y if a child has and/or has been exposed to a communicable condition. Conversely, the Y will notify all parents 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.

### **Children may attend programming with:**

- Earaches, Strep Throat, Conjunctivitis provided they have been on medication for a full 24 hours.
- Colds, provided they have been fever free, medication free and symptom free for 24 hours.
- Seasonal allergies and other non-contagious conditions.

**Children will be sent home if they cannot keep up with the pace of activities due to an illness evident or developed during program hours.** Parents or an authorized release person will be expected to pick up the child within one hour of being notified.

### **Preventative Health Procedures:**

Described below are the infection control measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease. We follow exclusion policies for serious illnesses, contagious diseases, and reportable diseases in conformance with the regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, The Department of Public Health. Procedures shall include the notification of all parents in accordance with the Department of Public Health's recommendation.

**Illness:** All children within a school or childcare program are continuously exposed to each other's germs. Parents are asked not to send their child to the program if he or she is sick or contagious. If a child becomes ill during the program hours (fever, vomiting, diarrhea etc.) the parents or emergency contacts will be called immediately to come and pick up the ill child. The child will not be able to return to the program until they are fever and symptom free for 24 hours.

**Handwashing and Personal Hygiene:** Transmission of infection in a childcare setting can be dramatically reduced by frequent and proper washing of hands. Staff and children are encouraged to follow the method recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Wash your hands with soap and warm running water for 20 seconds (long enough to sing the ABC song) and wipe your hands with a paper towel, then use that paper towel to turn off the faucets. Children are required to wash their hands before eating, after using the rest room, when entering or exiting a program area, and arrival to the program.

### ***Allergies must be disclosed in advance***

Any food, drug or environmental allergies **must be disclosed** in the Allergies section of a child's registration/enrollment information. This information will be placed on a master list and posted in food preparation and distribution areas, offices of the Director of Out-of-School Time/ Director of Preschool and Family Services and in the classrooms. All staff will be informed. The Y does not serve or allow products containing peanuts or tree nuts in its programs as an overall precaution.



### **Dispensing Medication:**

Prescription medication is administered pending a written order from the child's physician and with written prior parent authorization. As part of a child's record, an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) must be completed and signed by a child's physician and parent/guardian if the child has a chronic medical condition that requires daily medication.

The YMCA keeps a written record of the administration of any medication and follows a protocol called the *5 Rights of Medication*: the right child; medication; the date, time and route. Every time a prescription medicine is administered by staff, detailed information on the dosage is logged and kept in the child's file. All medications are stored under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. Unused medications will be returned to the parent/guardian. Parents will be notified, in advance, of any dispensation of non-prescription medicine. All pertinent information regarding the dosage, date and time will be recorded and retained in a child's file.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

A child seriously injured at the YMCA will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Parents will be notified immediately. A staff member accompanies the child with emergency forms and stays with the child until parent/guardian arrives. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact on file will be notified. If a child is seriously injured while on a field trip, the same protocol is followed. Parent/Guardian receives all written documentation related to the injury within 24 hours.

### **Fire Emergency and Evacuation Procedures:**

Emergency evacuation procedures are posted conspicuously throughout the YMCA facility. Staff are orientated with their location and procedure. Practice emergency evacuation drills are held every month with the staff and children, using different exit routes. The date and time of the drill and its effectiveness are documented in the evacuation log in the Offices of the Director of Out-of-School Time/ Director of Preschool and Family Services. The Out-of-School Time program meets on the sidewalk/grass area down by Church Street unless instructed otherwise by proper authorities.

### **Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting:**

Daily cleaning and sanitizing are best practices followed at the Out-of-School Time program. In our efforts to ensure children's health and well-being, our routine includes washing, sanitizing and disinfecting all surfaces, including floors, toilets, sinks and faucets and tables daily. The disinfectant used is either a self-made bleach solution or a commercially prepared one approved by the Environmental protection Agency (EPA). All cleaning supplies are stored in secure places and out of the reach of children.



## Appendix A

### **CODE OF CONDUCT Out of School Time (OST) West Suburban YMCA**

The West Suburban YMCA (WSYMCA) strives to maintain a positive environment for all children in our Out of School Time (OST) program. All program participants have the right to feel welcome, safe and nurtured. As a result, the WSYMCA has established a Code of Conduct to govern the actions and behaviors of all OST program participants.

#### **PARTICIPANTS ARE EXPECTED TO**

- Uphold WSYMCA core values of RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY and CARING
- Be respectful of all by not initiating or participating in derogatory or unwelcome comments, conduct or actions of a sexual nature or actions based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation or any other legally protected status.
- Comply with leader instructions and redirection
- Willingly remain in program area within sight and sound supervision
- Follow the group plan for each day

#### **NO TOLERANCE POLICY**

We ask for parent and guardian support in maintaining a fun, safe place for both children and WSYMCA staff to learn, grow and thrive. Ideally, we want to work with children and families to prevent these behaviors from occurring. Please talk to your child about the importance of not exhibiting the behaviors listed but not limited to the following:

- Bullying/Harassment of any kind (see specifics below)
- Action deemed physically or verbally aggressive towards WSYMCA staff & other participants including spitting and foul language
- Purposely leaving program area without permission
- Hiding anywhere outside of visual and auditory supervision of staff
- Damaging WSYMCA property
- Rough play (headlocks, tackling, etc. with the intent to harm)
- Deliberately or repeated throwing objects in a manner that could be harmful towards self or others
- Creating artwork depicting inappropriate images
- Using WSYMCA technology inappropriately (taking & using WSYMCA issued electronics & related applications; etc.)
- Drugs, alcohol or weapons of any kind

#### **BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

A person is being bullied when they experience repeated exposure to the negative actions of others. Negative actions can include an imbalance of power due to age, physical strength or information that can be used against another person. These negative actions may include but are not limited to:

- Physical (hitting, shoving, grabbing, spitting, tripping, inappropriate hand gestures, inappropriate touching)
- Verbal (teasing, name-calling, racial or sexual comments or slurs, threatening to cause harm, taunting)
- Social (spreading rumors, shunning or excluding, telling other children not to be friends with someone, embarrassing someone in public)



Failure to follow this code of conduct will result in disciplinary action which may include being sent home early, suspension or removal from the program. The overall integrity and quality of the WSYMCA OST program is of utmost importance and we will take the steps necessary to ensure both. Due to the wide variety of behaviors that children display, the WSYMCA reserves the right to make the decision to suspend or expel a child based on physical or emotional safety of the child, other children in the program and the staff.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

- To ensure that WSYMCA Programs are a positive and healthy atmosphere, this Code of Conduct sets forth conditions that parents/guardians are expected to follow and promote.
- Parents/Guardians will behave in a way that represents the four core values of the WSYMCA: CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY.
- Parents/Guardians must refrain from foul language while at a WSYMCA program location.
- Parents/Guardians will not show or exhibit derogatory conduct toward any WSYMCA staff, participants, or other parents/guardians.
- Parents/Guardians will not be allowed to take pictures/video of other OST participants
- Parents/Guardians will comply with requests from staff for Photo ID during pick up.

I have read and acknowledge the above policies and will review them with my child(ren) before program participation. I understand that my cooperation and support as a parent or guardian is critical to the success of my child's participation in the OST program.

\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF CHILD(REN)



## Acknowledgement

I acknowledge receipt of this parent handbook which contains our statement of non-discrimination and purpose, philosophy, current fee schedule, YMCA organizational information, statement of parental rights, plan for behavior management, yearly schedule, open door policy, health and illness policies and other pertinent information about our program.

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(Child's Name)

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(Parent Signature)

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(Date)