Y EXPLORE AFTERSCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

YMCA of Metro Atlanta

INSPIRING SUCCESS IN & OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

WELCOME

Thank you for choosing the YMCA for your child's Afterschool Program. We look forward to providing your child with afternoons filled with fun, adventure and learning while in a safe and positive environment. The Y is dedicated to creating programs that teach and encourage healthy lifestyle choices and that nurture and enrich your child's life.

Our programs are designed to offer each child many opportunities for intellectual, physical and social development. Children take part in a wide variety of group and individual activities including art, enrichment components, homework time and sports. We offer a quality program that includes planned activities to complement the school experience.

Our highest goal is a warm, safe and caring atmosphere for children. YMCA staff members are here to support both children and parents. This handbook will acquaint you with the procedures and policies of this program. We believe in open communication among students, parents and Y staff.

We invite you to share your questions, areas of interest, hopes, fears and concerns with us. We are here to support both our students and parents to ensure your child's success and well-being.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your child's learning experience. We look forward to this new adventure!

YMCA of Metro Atlanta
Y Explore Afterschool Team

Y LEADERSHIP & CONTACTS

Each Y Afterschool Program site has a Director (Site Director) and a staff of counselors to care for the children and implement the program. In addition to this part-time site staff, we have a full-time YMCA Director, who supports and supervises each of the Y Afterschool programs. We also have a registrar who manages registration, scholarships, cancellations, and more! We are available to assist you with any of your Y Afterschool questions or specific needs.

PROGRAM HOURS

Y Afterschool is a full-time program that offers after school care during the school year (August – May), Monday – Friday on school days from school dismissal until 6:30 pm.*
**Select locations close at 6:00 pm. Please confirm the exact closing time with your program director.*

ENROLLMENT

The Y Afterschool Program is offered to children grades PK through 5th who attend a school in which the program is available. Enrollment may be limited due to constraints of space and staffing. The monthly cost varies based on the number of weeks in the month.

UPDATED ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Parent/guardians are required to update all information on their child's online account when changes occur. This includes changes in authorized pick-ups, parent/guardian status, addresses, phone numbers, special needs, allergies, etc. In addition, all participants are required to turn in the paper registration document to their Site Director on the child's first day of attendance, along with immunization records. Returning participants must turn in the most recent copy of their immunization records.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

As a state licensed child care facility, we are required by the Department of Health to have a copy of the most recent GA Form 3231 immunization record for your child. Please make sure your child has received all required screenings prior to registration. For the safety of all participants and staff, children who have not received all the necessary health screenings will not be able to participate in the program until their health records are up-to-date.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our students' records. We understand the importance of safeguarding personal information and ensuring that it is only shared with authorized individuals. Our confidentiality standards include:

- We keep all student records secure and confidential.
- Only authorized afterschool personnel have access to these records.
- Information from student records is only shared with parents/guardians and other authorized individuals as permitted by law.
- We strive to adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to protect the privacy of student education records.

FEES & REGISTRATION

Y Afterschool fees are as follows:

- $55 for an Annual Program membership. This membership allows your family to register for YMCA programs for one year from the date of purchase.
- $85 weekly for full-time attendance or $45 weekly for part-time (1/2 days) attendance.
- Registration is completed by registering for the school year online at *ymcaatlanta.org/activity-finder*. You may choose weekly or monthly auto-charge during the initial registration.
- A deposit may be required to reserve your child's space for the year.

PAYMENT POLICIES

- Payments can be made by auto draft or invoice.
- The YMCA accepts Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover for payments. (A 3% fee applies to all credit card payments. This fee helps offset processing costs and is not charged by your credit card company.)

- Three days of Y Afterschool attendance = Full week payment
- Your payment may be prorated only if your child is absent from the program for three or more days in any given week due to illness. Please submit request for credit with a note from your child's doctor within 30 days. Approval for pro-rating must be given by the Afterschool Director or the Associate Director.
- Participants are only able to start Afterschool on Mondays. You must be registered by noon the Friday before you would like your child to begin the Y Afterschool program. If there is a special circumstance that requires a start date after Monday, please contact your Afterschool Director.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

As a non-profit organization, the YMCA provides financial assistance to families in need, enabling them to participate in Y programs. Financial assistance is made possible through generous donations to the Annual Campaign by members, volunteers, staff and our community. However, financial assistance is limited, and the amount of assistance is determined by family income and other factors. For more information, please contact your Y Afterschool Director.

The YMCA accepts third party payment from organizations that help families in need. An agreement must be in place between the designated organization and the YMCA prior to the child's start date in the program. If applying for CAPS, we recommend that you do so two months prior to your child's anticipated program start date. If you have applied and are awaiting a response from your CAPS Case Worker, please let your Program Director know.

If your child qualifies for free or reduced school lunch, please provide documentation to the Y and your child's fee will be automatically reduced to $55/week.

Please note that each family may only use one form of financial assistance.

LATE PICKUP FEES

Sites close promptly at 6:30 pm.* If your child is left after closing time, YMCA staff will attempt to contact parents first and then will proceed to the listed emergency contacts. A late fee of $1 per minute per child will be assessed. The YMCA will contact local authorities for support if any child is not picked up within 30 minutes of programs close and emergency contacts cannot be reached.
**Select locations close at 6:00 pm. Please confirm the exact closing time with your program director.*

CANCELLATION POLICY

A two-week written notice of withdrawal must be received by the YMCA two weeks prior to the last day of attendance. Please indicate the reason for withdrawal on your notice. Please note that you are responsible for payment until the notice is verified by the YMCA. If there are any questions or concerns about withdrawing your child, please contact your Afterschool Director.

ATTENDANCE

Once registered, your child will be expected to attend the program each day. Y staff will take attendance within the first 10 minutes of the program. Please contact your Afterschool Director if your child will not be attending Y Afterschool on a particular day. In addition, notify your school that your child will have a change of dismissal plan.

RELEASING CHILDREN FROM THE PROGRAM

All children must be signed out daily by an authorized adult over the age of 18. The Y will only release children to their parents or those persons listed on their enrollment form as authorized. If you need to make changes to the list of people authorized to pickup your child,

please do so by logging in to your Y account. Every day, we will ask for a picture ID and check the authorization for the release of the child. If the person is not authorized to pick up the child, the child will not be released.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PICKUP AUTHORIZATION POLICY

If there is a parent/guardian who is not, or is no longer, authorized to pickup your child, it is the responsibility of the guardian listed as the primary contact on the account to provide the YMCA with the most current legal documents confirming this information. The YMCA will abide by legal documents provided. If parent/guardians are unable to settle disputes relating to childcare, we reserve the right to temporarily unenroll your child until the proper documentation is received.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If the school closes at any time due to emergencies (i.e. weather, power failure, building emergency), Y Afterschool will not be provided. Please pay attention to your school district's communication channels for closing announcements. In instances when the school district announces early dismissal or cancels afterschool activities, parents are responsible for contacting the school to let them know how their child will be traveling home.

SCHOOL BREAK CAMP

The YMCA will provide care from 7:00 am – 6:30 pm at the branch during most school breaks and teacher workdays. There is an additional fee and registration required to participate in these camp days. Please note that registration in the Afterschool Program does not guarantee a space in camps as they are separate programs. Please visit ymcaatlanta.org/activity-finder to reserve your child's spot.

YOUTH WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES

At the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, we know that communities are stronger and more vibrant when everyone can take part in programs where they can learn, grow and thrive.

Our Y afterschool program provides fun and engaging activities to engage children all school year. While we strive to adapt and modify activities to address different levels of ability and learning styles, there may be instances where a child's needs may exceed the parameters of the scope of our program. Due to the program components and environment, Y programs may not be a fit for every child.

While your child's growth and development is our top priority, we do not offer therapeutic or clinical levels of intervention or reporting. Progress notes should not be expected as they are outside our scope of services.

As a parent/guardian, you know your child best, and we want to learn from you. We ask that you take the following steps before the program begins. If you miss a step, the start of programming for your child may be delayed:

- Share any behaviors and accommodations that may help your child be more successful in Y programs on the registration form.
- Meet with the Program Director before the start of the program to ensure we are setting your child up for success.

The Program Director may also request a meeting after the program begins to learn of recognized steps that may help your child be more successful in Y programs.

OUR COUNSELORS – 1:18 RATIO

Recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting staff are essential, interrelated processes in ensuring the success and integrity of Y programming. The staff is selected for personal qualities of warmth, empathy, and ability to relate positively to children. They receive training in many areas: CPR/First Aid,

Risk Management, Child Abuse Prevention and numerous activities including arts/crafts, games, group team building and much more. Background checks and drug tests are conducted on all staff and volunteers. This includes criminal record checks and reference checks. Each staff person is also a mandated reporter. This means that when a youth or teen comes to employees and volunteers with a report of abuse or if an employee or volunteer suspects that a youth or teen is the victim of abuse, they must work with Y leadership to review the situation and determine appropriate next steps. Our staff to child ratio will be 1:18 or less to ensure focused attention and the ability for each group to maintain health and safety standards.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent support is critical to the success of the program. The YMCA recognizes and values parents in our programs. Daily communication with staff is very important. Please share with us how we can support and encourage your child. Family events or activities may be scheduled during the semester. Look for event information on our social media channels, email newsletters and special invitations sent home. In addition, donations of supplies for our outdoor play and arts & crafts areas are gratefully appreciated.

YOUTH & TEEN SAFETY

The YMCA of Metro Atlanta is committed to youth and teen safety in everything we do. To read our Youth & Teen Safety Policy and to learn how to recognize and prevent abuse in our community, visit ymcaatlanta.org/youthsafety

AFTERSCHOOL COMPONENTS

Engaging curriculum developed in partnership with Mount Vernon Ventures including:

- Monthly themes
- Imagination Stations
- Afterschool clubs
- Career exploration
- Healthy living components and activities
- Homework time with assistance
- Healthy snack

The YMCA has partnered with WINGS to build foundational life skills in all children by integrating social emotional learning in afterschool programs.

WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

Children should avoid bringing personal items to the Afterschool program. The YMCA is not responsible for these items. Things can be lost, borrowed or broken. Do not bring:

- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives
- Toys, playing cards, gum, or candy
- Money, jewelry, collectibles, trading cards, or other items of value
- Sports equipment
- Electronics devices, including phones, tablets, smart watches, and gaming devices

EXTRA CLOTHES

Children will be responsible for changing out of their soiled/dirty clothing and cleaning themselves if an accident occurs. Children will be assisted at bathroom time if needed. However, if a child cannot clean themselves adequately or does not have a change of clothes, parents may be notified. Please be advised that soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and underwear thrown away unless otherwise directed by the parent. YMCA staff cannot wash your child's soiled clothing. Please pack extra clothes in case of any incident.

LOST AND FOUND

We will not keep a lost and found area. Any item found that is labeled with your child's name will be returned to your child's group. Found items that are not labeled will be donated to charity.

POSITIVE CHILD GUIDANCE MODEL

Our Y Afterschool environment is designed for children to grow and learn. As such, we believe that discipline should be a learning experience with important teachable moments. Our goal is to be proactive and preventive in our positive behavior management procedures. This involves setting clear and consistent expectations, understanding of consequences, positive redirection, accountability/follow-through, and positive reinforcement.

The following steps will be taken when behavior expectations have not been met:

1. Redirection and encouragement to choose a different behavior.
2. Verbal warning, temporary break from activity for reflection with child regarding the behavior choice made, exploration of why the choice was made, identifying alternative choices they can make in the future.
3. Verbal communication between parent and staff.
4. Withdrawal from the activity for the day.
5. If behavior is repeated following a conversation with the parent, the child may be suspended from the program for 1 to 5 days. At this time, a behavior contract may be required to return.
6. If behavior persists, suspension will be extended for 1 week and a written behavior contract will be drawn up with the child. The parent/guardian and child will be required to meet with the Site Director and/or Program Director before returning.
7. If the behavior contract is broken or if the child's behavior continues to be disruptive, violent or unsafe, dismissal from the program may result.

Our priority is to keep all children physically and emotionally safe. If a child's behavior is threatening the safety of themselves or others in the program, the Site Director or Y Program Director may move directly to step 5. Fighting, hitting, or violent behavior can result in immediate dismissal from the program.

BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is not an isolated incident. Each child entering our program will attend an afterschool orientation on the first day of the session where staff will discuss expectations, our behavior policy and the Zero-Tolerance Policy. Parents will be notified through an incident report, phone call or email if their child is involved in a reported incident. To be successful with this aspect of our community, we will deliver age-appropriate activities that encourage and develop listening skills, working together and understanding others. We are committed to ensuring that our children have the opportunity to learn, grow and explore in an emotionally safe environment designed to build self-confidence and teach responsibility. If a child cannot adjust to these rules and expectations, we reserve the right to terminate the child's enrollment in the program.

ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY

Purpose: The safety, well-being, and positive experience of all participants and staff are the top priorities at our camp. To maintain a safe and respectful environment, we have a Zero-Tolerance Policy for any form of aggressive behavior, whether verbal, physical, or emotional. This policy applies to all children, staff, and adults involved in our programs.

Aggressive behavior is defined as any action or words that may cause harm, fear, or discomfort to another person. This includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal Aggression: Insults, threats, name-calling, or use of inappropriate or offensive language.
- Physical Aggression: Pushing, hitting, kicking, or any form of physical violence.
- Emotional Aggression: Bullying, intimidation, exclusion, or actions that affect the emotional well-being of another person.

Any behavior deemed aggressive or harmful will result in immediate action by camp staff. This may include but is not limited to:

- Separation from the group for a cooling-off period.
- Parent/guardian notification of the incident.
- A meeting with camp leadership to discuss the behavior.

Consequences of Aggressive Behavior

Our camp maintains a Zero-Tolerance Policy, which means aggressive behavior will result in the following consequences:

1. First Offense

- A formal warning will be issued, and the child/adult will be removed from the activity temporarily.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately, and a meeting with the camp leadership may be required.

2. Second Offense:

- Immediate removal from the program for the day, or multiple days, with a mandatory meeting between camp leadership, parents/guardians, and the participants.

3. Third Offense:

- Permanent dismissal from the program with no refund of fees. The participant will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the camp session or future sessions.

Serious Violations

In cases where aggression is deemed severe (e.g., physical violence or severe bullying), immediate dismissal from the program without prior warnings may occur. By implementing this policy, we are ensuring that all participants can enjoy a safe, supportive, and positive camp experience.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for children, families and staff. Parents, guardians and other adults interacting with YMCA programs are expected to treat others respectfully, comply with program policies, follow staff directions, and communicate concerns in an appropriate and constructive manner.

Threatening, abusive, harassing, intimidating, profane, physically aggressive or disruptive conduct is prohibited. Depending on the nature and severity of the conduct, the YMCA may restrict an individual's access to program areas or suspend or terminate the family's program participation. Conduct presenting an immediate safety concern may result in removal from YMCA property and referral to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.

COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between parents/guardians and Y staff is essential in providing a well-structured, high-quality experience that meets the needs of each child. In addition to written communication you receive from the YMCA, we encourage all families to communicate regularly with Y staff to ensure we are meeting your child’s needs and your expectations. It is important to keep the staff informed of any changes occurring in your child’s life that may affect their behavior or mood. These changes may include, moving, hospitalization, long term illness or death of a family member, physical changes, separation or divorce, or issues at school. Parents are welcome to use either mail or phone to communicate with the Y staff.

Meetings and conferences with YMCA staff are sometimes necessary to best meet the needs of your child. These meetings can be initiated by you or the YMCA. If you are interested in having a conference, please see your Site Director. We encourage you to address concerns and make suggestions directly to

your Site Director. If your child is receiving special support services during the school day and it would be beneficial for the school and Y staff to be able to discuss specific challenges, concerns and/or strategies, the Site Director will work with the parent and school to obtain appropriate permissions. If you feel that your concerns or suggestions have not been addressed, or you need support in addressing them, please feel free to contact the Program Director. We encourage you to share your positive feedback directly with the Y Afterschool Program staff and with the Program Director. Remember that the YMCA is responsible for the Y Afterschool Program, not your school administration. Any issues related to Y Afterschool should be brought directly to the Y Staff. Issues brought to the attention of school administrators will be referred back to the YMCA. The YMCA will confer with your school principal on a regular basis.

FIRST AID, ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

YMCA staff are First Aid & CPR certified and have been trained in emergency procedures. We will call you or your emergency contact to notify of a minor accident or injury.

Although we take every effort to keep the children in our Y Afterschool Program safe at all times, accidents and injuries are a normal part of childhood. Should your child become injured during afterschool the following steps will be taken:

- ***Minor injuries*** (scrapes, bumps, bruises etc.) will be cleaned with soap and water and treated with Band-Aid or ice pack as needed. You will be notified of the injury at pick-up time.

- ***Head injuries*** - Due to the possible implications of head injuries we will treat all head injuries as a serious matter. The staff will monitor the child for signs of a concussion and will provide ice if needed. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of a head injury.

- ***More severe injuries*** - If a child should suffer a more severe injury, we will attempt to contact a parent/guardian before seeking professional medical attention. If we are unable to reach a parent/ guardian, we will call emergency contacts. If these steps are unsuccessful, we will seek professional medical attention and continue our attempt to reach parents.

- ***Emergencies*** - If a child should need immediate medical attention, we will contact 911, parents/ guardians, and the YMCA offices. If the child is transported by ambulance, they will be accompanied by the Site Director. If we are unable to reach parent/guardians, we will contact the child's physician, emergency contacts as listed and continue our attempts to reach a parent/guardian. We will immediately notify the parent of the hospital to which the child is being transported.

SICK CHILDREN

To maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children, students who are ill, which includes but is not limited to oral temperatures of 100.4 degrees F or higher, any contagious symptoms such as rashes, sore throat, congestion, vomiting, etc., may not attend Afterschool. If your child has been exposed to or contracted any serious communicable or infectious disease, they may not return until accompanied by a note from the child's physician. The YMCA will keep parents informed of any incidents, including illnesses, injuries and exposure to communicable diseases, and will post when a communicable disease has been introduced into the program. If you are notified that your child is ill, arrangements must be made for immediate pick-up (within 30 minutes or less, depending on severity of illness).

RETURNING TO AFTERSCOOL AFTER ILLNESS

Per Georgia Department of Health and CDC, any worker or camper that stayed home sick, been prevented from entering camp due to signs of illness, or been sent home during camp due to signs of illness shall not be permitted to attend camp again until...

- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- AND symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved

DISCLOSURE OF ALLERGIES

Please clearly indicate any food, environmental, or medication allergies during registration and on your child's health forms. Be as specific as possible to help us ensure appropriate accommodations. If your camper has a severe allergy, please speak directly to the Camp Director prior to your camp session.

MEDICATION

Y staff can administer prescription medication when we receive all appropriate medical forms. All prescription medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label. All over-the-counter medication must be in the original packaging and clearly marked with your child's name. After registration you will be provided with additional information in case your child needs to receive medication during afterschool.

OTHER EMERGENCIES

Each site has developed emergency procedures for fire, tornado, lock down situations, and other emergencies. Plans for handling fire, floods, tornadoes, severe weather, intruders, lost/missing children, injuries/illnesses are covered during staff training prior to the start of Afterschool. These procedures are reviewed regularly.

EMERGENCY REUNIFICATION PLAN

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation or relocation, all students and staff will be transported to the designated reunification site. The reunification site location will be communicated to families as soon as possible through established communication channels and will serve as the meeting point for parent/guardian pickup.

Staff will verify authorization prior to releasing any camper. For the safety of all participants, no child will be released without proper identification and verification.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

The Y is committed to offering a safe and healthy workplace. Employees are trained in hazard awareness (GHST raining) to ensure they are fully informed and aware of any chemical hazards in the workplace. Hazardous Material is kept locked up and away from children at all times, not pertaining to hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. The Y makes available Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all products used at YMCA facilities.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

As professional child care providers, we are mandated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Staff will report all suspicions directly to the Y Program Director prior to calling the State of Georgia Department of Human Resources, Child Protection Agency (DFCS), to file a report within the time required. If you as a parent/guardian have any concerns regarding the treatment of your child by a staff member, you should notify the Y Program Director immediately.

PICTURES & VIDEOS

Periodically, the YMCA takes pictures and/or videos of children and activities for newsletters and for the promotion of programs in brochures or presentations. If you do not want your child's picture to be used, please complete the refusal form contained in your registration packet and return it to your Site Director.

YMCA STAFF AS BABYSITTERS

Y Staff are not permitted to babysit for children outside of Y programs. Staff also understand that all parent packets discourage parents from using YMCA staff for babysitting.

DECAL REQUIRED NOTIFICATION / ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) can occur when an infant or young child is violently shaken, causing serious brain injury. Warning signs may include unusual sleepiness, difficulty waking, irritability, poor feeding, vomiting, breathing problems, seizures, loss of consciousness, or unexplained bruising. Staff should be alert to these symptoms and immediately report any concerns according to YMCA child protection and reporting procedures.

Children under the age of 5 are at the greatest risk for experiencing shaken baby syndrome, with infants (birth to 12 months) being particularly vulnerable due to their developing brains and weak neck muscles. YMCA Afterschool programs primarily serve school-age children ages 5 and older; however, some programs may occasionally serve children enrolled in Pre-K who are 4 years of age. While YMCA Afterschool programs do not serve infants or toddlers, staff and families should still understand the signs and symptoms of SBS to support child safety awareness.