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WESTPORT WESTON FAMILY YMCA
School Age Child Care
2022–2023

Parent Handbook

Updated 06/15/2022 KG



School Age Child Care

Program at a Glance

Thank you for registering your child for our School Age Child Care Program. We strongly believe that every child needs a safe and rewarding experience each and every day. Our program is designed for children in Kindergarten through 5th grade to provide an environment where each child can learn and grow through a wide variety of exciting activities that promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We maintain a strong commitment to building character in youth through our four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. The purpose of this handbook is to promote understanding of our program and its policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, you may call the Director. Our caregivers are committed to providing you and your child with the best possible service. Together we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for children between school and home.

Program Contact Information

Kathy Giglio

(203) 571-6040

kqiglio@westportymca.org

Where are the before and after school program located and how do students get there?

The Westport Weston Family YMCA Before and After School Program is located at the YMCA's Bedford Family Center and Beck Lodge at 14 Allen Raymond Lane. Children from Westport and Weston Public Schools will be bussed to school in the mornings and from school to the YMCA in the afternoons. On school half days (Westport school schedule), children who are normally scheduled on those days will be picked up at early dismissal and brought to the site.

How do I enroll for the School Age Child Care Program?

A child will be accepted for admission if (1) there is a space in the program, (2) has all enrollment and release forms completed and signed, and (3) has a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical submitted, along with any medical documentation for medication. A deposit, which will be put towards your child's first month, of \$150 will be due at registration. You can visit us at www.westportymca.org to enroll your child!

What specific paperwork do I need to submit at registration?

Children will not be officially registered and allowed to attend the program until they have ALL of the following documents on file:

- Registration and Release Form signed/dated
- Payment Authorization Form or Credit Card on file in our digital system
- Health Form, including Health History page signed/dated by guardian
- Behavior Management Policy signed/dated
- Authorization for Medication Administration Form (if needed)
- Emergency Action Plan (if needed)
- Additional forms specific to the program may be required
- **Legal Custody and Injunctions:** A copy of any court ordered custody decree or injunction must be kept on file at the YMCA.

What is the daily schedule of the School Age Child Care Program?

Before Care runs from 7:00am until the start of school. Parents/guardians will bring their child(ren) to the Westport Weston Family YMCA themselves. Children will be brought by bus to their school at the appropriate time. After Care runs from the end of school through 6:00pm. Parents must pick up their child no later than 6:00pm, or late fees will apply. Children must be enrolled for a minimum of three days a week.

What if I have to change my child's schedule?

One time changes should be communicated both to the Childcare Director as well as the school through the dismissal manager. If you need to change your child's schedule for a long period of time, please contact the Director so the schedule can be changed on the rosters. Be sure to let the school know of any changes you make as they are the ones who organize the children at dismissal and send them to the YMCA bus. Please keep changes to a minimum and realize we may not be able to make changes depending on availability. Permanent changes will become effective on the first of the following month and must be made in writing to the Director 10 days prior to the first day of the month of change.

What is the policy for school cancellations, delays, early dismissal, and school holidays?

On scheduled early dismissal days (Westport Public School schedule), the After School Program will pick the children up early and run until 6:00 pm as usual. If a school has a delayed opening our morning program generally follows the same delay. For example, if a school has a 1 hour delay, the morning program will be delayed 1 hour and will open at 8am. If there is an early dismissal, unscheduled, for any reason, the After School Program WILL NOT RUN. Please make sure you have an alternative care option for these situations and keep an eye out for notifications from the YMCA. The YMCA uses a text system for notifications. Please make sure your most up-to-date phone number and email address are on file. We will make sure to let you know as soon as possible if we will be running or not. On many of the local school holidays we will run a Vacation Day Program. Our Vacation Day Programs run at the YMCA and include a field trip or special event, swimming, Arts & Crafts, gym time and other camp activities. This program has limited space and is first-come, first-serve, and requires an additional registration form and separate fees.

How do tuition and payments work?

The School Age Child Care Programs are tuition-based. The yearly cost per child for the program is based on the 180 calendar days in the school year and divided into 10 equal payments. Monthly payments remain the same regardless of weather related closings, absences, and holidays. All families are required to use auto-bill payment for program tuition. Automatic payments will be drafted on the 1st of each month prior to services rendered. If fees are not paid by the 10th day of the month prior to attendance, the tuition will be considered not paid and the child will not be eligible to be in the program. Payment can be made by debit or credit card or in the form of an EFT, which would come directly from your checking account. A late payment charge of \$25 will be imposed if any form of payment is declined or if the payment is made after the 10th of the month it is due.

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization that prides itself on being able to meet the needs of the community. If you need financial assistance in order to attend the program, please contact the YMCA for an application or download it from westportymca.org.

Do I receive credit for absences/school vacations?

We do not give refunds for days that children are absent or days when the program has to close. There is no partial payment if a child is out sick or on vacation. The only exception would be if a child were away from the program due to a prolonged illness. In such a case, the Director should be notified at the beginning of the absence, not upon returning to the program. No credit will be given for long-term absences, of over a week, without a doctor's note.

What about a refund if we withdraw?

We require thirty (30) days notice prior to withdrawing a child from the program. No refunds will be given for payments made or for any portion of a month during which the child leaves the program. We will not give credit for any missed days. If you have PAID IN ADVANCE, you may ask for the remaining refund. This refund will take approximately two weeks to process OR you may apply the CREDIT toward another program within the WWF YMCA.

How will the program staff reach me?

It is very important that we have the most current contact information for you and the emergency contacts we keep on file for your child. You will be called and/or emailed when we need to reach you. Throughout the school year we will provide you with a form to update your information, but if something changes, please remember to let the staff know.

What if there are problems in school or at home that carry over to the Childcare Program?

We want to make sure that the Before and After School programs are fun for our students. We know that sometimes there may be issues that your child may be having at school or at home which can affect his/her behavior at the program. Please keep us informed of such issues so we can be sensitive to your child's needs. The WWF YMCA staff works as a team with schools and families. This enables us to provide the best environment for your child's growth and development.

What happens if my child is absent from school?

Safety is our number one priority. The Childcare and Youth Services Director must be notified at the YMCA through email at kgiglio@westportny.org by 12:00pm on days your child will be absent for any reason. For the safety of your child, it is important that we know if your child will be missing any of their normally scheduled days.

How can I add extra activities to my child's schedule?

Extra activities require an additional fee. Children who are a part of our After School Program are able to also register for other YMCA programs that take place during the time the kids are at the YMCA. This includes swimming, dance, gymnastics, soccer, karate, fencing, and sports classes. After registering their child for the program, parents should notify the director of the day and time of the program. Program staff will walk the child to the program and parents will pick them up at the end of the class, unless the class ends at 6pm or later. In order to register your child for a class, please register online or call the YMCA front desk at 203-226-8981. After School program staff will not register children for additional programs.

Are there programs for school vacations?

The School Age Program does not meet on school holidays or days off from school. Instead, Vacation Special Camps are offered to all children in the community in grades PK3 through 5th. Vacation Special days include swimming, crafts, games, and special activities. A separate registration is required and is not part of your regular payment. The member fee is \$115 per day and the non-member fee is \$145 per day. Registration is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

How does pick up and sign out work?

Each child must be physically signed out from the program every day by an authorized adult, including when being brought to an activity such as sports. Only adults who are given permission in writing may sign the children out of the program. Adults other than parents or guardians who you wish to give permission to pick up may be listed on your registration form. Only those persons authorized on the enrollment form will be allowed to pick up children in the program. If you need to add someone to the approved pick-up list, please provide their information in writing to the staff prior to the day of pick up. Staff will question those with whom they are unfamiliar and check their authorization and identification; they must provide a photo ID to

pick up. Anyone without proper authorization will be refused from taking a child from the YMCA's After School Program. Please understand that this is an important security issue. The staff may refuse release of any child to an unauthorized person.

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

What happens if I am late to pick up?

We all run late on occasion, but we ask that you respect the time of our program staff who stay to keep the site open for our students. If you are running late, please call the YMCA at 203-226-8981 and ask them to get a message to the School Age Program staff. Please do not leave a voicemail on an office phone as it may not be checked in time.

If your child is not picked up by 6:00pm, and it is the first time, you will get a warning. After that, you will be charged \$1 per minute you are late. If a parent does not show up by 6:15pm, an emergency contact will be called. If emergency contacts cannot be reached by 6:30pm our next step is to call the Police and then DCF. Repeated occurrences may result in dismissal from the program.

What activities do the children do?

Organized games and activities are planned for Before and After Care. Outside play at Mahackeno Outdoor Center, gym time, STEM, art, social-emotional learning, and BOKS Kids programming, as well as a healthy afternoon snack and other special activities are planned for the children to participate in. We provide the opportunity and assistance for children to do their homework but are not responsible for monitoring studies. It is the responsibility of parents to encourage their children to do homework during the aftercare program. Additionally, the children are outside for activities unless there is severe weather. Please make sure they are prepared with the appropriate clothing to be comfortable outdoors.

What if my child becomes sick?

If your child shows signs of illness while in the program, the parent or the emergency contact on file will be called to pick him/her up, within a one (1) hour period. As we serve many working parents, it is essential to your child's well-being that a pick-up plan be in place. Please make sure to notify the Westport Weston Family YMCA if your home, work, or emergency contacts on file change.

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in our program: temperature of 100 or higher, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, head lice, vomiting, diarrhea, rash of unknown origin, or the presence of a contagious disease.

For the protection of all children, we will only serve well children. You must immediately notify the WWF YMCA if your child contracts a communicable disease so that other parents may be given necessary information.

What if my child is injured?

Minor injuries will be addressed by our First Aid certified staff and you will be informed at pick up. If more advanced emergency attention is required, the staff will take the necessary steps to obtain emergency medical care. These steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Attempts to contact a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached we will then contact the persons listed on the emergency contact information form that we have on file. Therefore, it is important that we are notified of any changes to the emergency contact information.
- Calling an ambulance or paramedic. If emergency room care is needed, the child will be accompanied by a WWF YMCA staff member.

Please note that the YMCA does not provide health or accident insurance. The parent/guardian assumes total liability for all charges incurred for medical treatment or property damage.

What happens if my child needs to take medications?

At least one YMCA staff member at the site is trained in the Administration of Medication and Epi-pen injections. The after school program will accept emergency medications. It is the responsibility of all parents to ensure that all medication and the paperwork that goes with it is up to date. If your child requires any form of medication or Epi-pen, the child's physician must fill out our medication administration form and provide us with an emergency action plan. We cannot accept the form from the doctor without your signed portion.

Individual Care Plans are required for any child who has developmental or special health care needs, such as allergies, asthma, seizure disorder, chronic illness, specific dietary needs, hearing or visual impairments, history of a contagious disease, or specific behavioral needs.

All medications must come in a week before their start date with the original container, labeled with the pharmacy label with the child's name. All medications must match the dosage and type of medication listed on the form. Please contact the Director if your child will require medication during their time in the program.

Are there resources there to help my child and our family?

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

What are the legal requirements for suspected child abuse and/or neglect?

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

What about legal custody agreements?

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

What are the teachers and staff like?

The Westport Weston Family YMCA After School Staff is made up of caring individuals who work to provide a safe and nurturing environment for your child. Our teachers are CPR and First Aid certified, and have been cleared to work through a rigorous process, including a thorough background check. The following are minimum requirements for positions with the Westport Weston Family YMCA School Age Program:

- Experience working with children either in a child care or summer camp setting
- Monthly trainings focused on First Aid/CPR, youth development, risk management, and other related areas
- YMCA staff are not permitted to babysit or transport children outside of the YMCA program. Please understand that a staff member can lose their job at the YMCA if they are found to be babysitting, transporting or visiting with families outside of the YMCA.

What is parent communication and involvement like?

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

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

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

What are the school age program rules?

The Y believes in positive behavior based upon the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The SACC environment is one in which children are nurtured and encouraged. We recognize that behavior issues will arise and therefore, we have developed progressive procedures that, while standardized, are adaptable to individual circumstances. Rules and policies on behavior are listed on the Behavior Management Policy in the School Age Childcare Registration Packet. Below are some highlights of the policy.

- No child may leave the program without an authorized adult (with a valid photo I.D.), who signs the child out, noting the departure time. There are no exceptions to this rule; it helps to ensure the safety of your child.
- Children must remain in view of staff members at all times.
- There will be no fighting (including hitting, pinching, kicking or spitting).
- Stealing and foul language are not allowed.
- Children and parents must follow building rules. School Age Program, Family YMCA, and school property will be respected.
- All food, garbage, and activity messes must be cleaned up by the group with staff supervision before going on to another activity. The School Age Program classrooms must be cleaned before the children leave for home.
- Children cannot eat items saved from lunch or brought into the program. Gum chewing is not allowed.
- Noise level will be kept at a moderate level in the room. The gym and outdoor play are provided for "louder level" activity.
- All clothing, book bags, lunch boxes, etc., should be marked with the child's name. The staff will not be responsible for personal items lost, stolen or broken. All toys and personal belongings are to be kept at home or left in the book bag and not played with in the School Age Program.
- Respecting others is required at all times.

What is the policy on toys and electronic devices?

The WWFY does not allow children to bring toys or expensive/valued items to the program. This includes trading cards (Pokémon), fidgets, stuffed animals, phones, music devices, smart watches, DSS or Nintendo Switches. There is always a risk that something can be broken or lost. The Y is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items.

Are there rules and policies for parents?

Yes! We expect all parents, family members, and staff to act as role models to the children. If, at any time, parents/guardians exhibit unkind behaviors towards YMCA staff, the Y holds the right to decide actions on membership and participation. This may include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children
- Threatening physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Failure to pay or habitual lateness in payments

- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child

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

Do you have an expulsion policy?

Proactive Actions to Prevent Expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, supervision
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will praise appropriate behavior
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- Child will be given verbal warnings
- Child will be given time to regain control

On rare occasions we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. This is a last-resort measure and we do everything possible to work with the family of the child to minimize this from occurring. We may have to immediately expel a child from the program for the following reasons:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- Failure of the child to adjust to our programs after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting

If the above recommended remedial actions do not work, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the behavior warranting the expulsion. This action is meant to allow a period of time so that the parent/guardian can work on the behavior or to come to an agreement with us about next steps. The following procedure will be set:

- The parent/guardian will be informed about the length of the expulsion period.
- The expected behavioral changes required in order for the child/parent to return to the center.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent a reasonable period of time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety).
- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A child will not be expelled if a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the YMCA's alleged violations of the Licensing requirements
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center
- Questioned the program regarding policies and procedures