

Cheshire Community YMCA

Childcare Family Handbook



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SECTION 1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. YMCA Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

B. Program Philosophy

At the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs, we believe in child-centered programs that encourage curiosity, exploration, and initiative. We recognize and accept that each child is an individual, with unique needs, abilities, and life experiences. The activities and materials chosen are geared to the child's level of development and encourage individuality and self-esteem.

C. Program Goals and Objectives

Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs Early Childhood and School Age before and after care programs are state-licensed. The programs are developed and maintained by the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs as part of our total offerings to provide desirable and needed services for the community.

In addition to providing for the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the child, our staff may also provide specialized supportive services, referrals and related social services to meet the varied needs of individual families and their children.

D. Statement on prohibition of Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs are committed to making its programs and activities available on a non-discriminatory basis as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability with regard to the full and equal enjoyment of its goods and services, privileges, advantages and accommodation. The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs will make reasonable modifications to its programs for children with disabilities, both new applicants and those already enrolled, on a case by case basis to permit them to participate in our childcare programs in the most integrated setting possible, unless the Southington-Cheshire YMCA can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of its goods and services.

When a request for a modification is made the YMCA will assess the needs of the child for whom the request has been made on a case by case basis. Parents/guardians should make the request in writing to the appropriate program director. The YMCA will work with families to provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with YMCA policy and applicable laws. The YMCA may request documentation concerning the child's needs.

Absent extenuating circumstances, parents/guardians will be notified of the YMCAs decision on the request for accommodations within 5 business days.

If the YMCA determines that they will not be able to provide the requested reasonable accommodations, the YMCA will notify the parents in writing which modification it will provide (if any) and which ones it will not provide. Pursuant to the ADA, the YMCA may choose to not provide an accommodation if that modification would fundamentally alter the nature of its services, program or activity.

SECTION 2 GENERAL POLICIES

A. Registration and Enrollment

Registration is completed annually through our online registration platform. Required medical forms must be submitted separately to online registration a minimum of 3 weeks prior to your child's start in the program for fall starts. All enrollment information must be completed by a legal guardian. The enrollment period is open registration throughout the year based on licensed capacity of our program space. There will be a registration hold in late August/early September. During this time a waitlist will be maintained and families will be contacted if a space becomes available on a first come, first serve basis.

To enroll in our Preschool programs children must be 2 years and 8 months by December 31. After December 31 children must be 3 years of age to start.

To enroll in our School Age programs, the child must be entering Kindergarten. Programming is available for children through 6th grade.

Enrollment is granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or special needs; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender sexual orientation, pregnancy, economic status or special needs.

Preschool participants must have health forms completed and updated annually. This health form must include a physical examination by the child's physician and up to date immunizations. School Age children must have health forms completed upon entering Kindergarten and 7th grade. This is a state requirement; children will not be permitted to attend the program without a current health form. Early Childhood students will also need documentation of the flu vaccine between September and December.

All children who participate in programs will be on a 90-day probationary period. Early Childhood participants must be fully toilet trained and out of pull-ups prior to entering the program. Staff can provide minimal assistance for occasional accidents. If toileting becomes an ongoing concern, the Early Childhood Director or Director of Child Development will meet with the family to discuss continued participation in the program. In general, mandated staff-child ratios and the YMCA's risk management policies do not permit us to sequester one or more staff in a private area away from the group of children.

The enrollment forms and payment responsibility form are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

B. Agreement with Parents

Parents are required to maintain current, up to date information for the child's records to include parent and emergency contact information, medical information and any other information relevant to their child's participation in this program.

C. Chain of Command

We value your input and want to hear your positive feedback or concerns about the program. As a first step, please attempt to resolve any issues with the teachers or Site Coordinator. If you feel the problem has not been remedied, please contact the appropriate Program Director. If it still has not been resolved, please contact the Childcare Director or Branch Director.

D. Parent Involvement

Parents are always encouraged to visit or volunteer their time within the program.

E. Medical Policies

See Section 3

F. Snacks

Snacks consist of a nutritious snack representing 2 food groups and water. We ask that children bring their own water bottle to our programs. If a child does not have a water bottle, drinking water will be provided for them. Children will have access to water throughout the day. The snack menu will be posted in your child's classroom or site location. For Preschool programs, the Office of Early Childhood requires that all lunches contain an ice pack. If your child's lunch needs to be heated up, the classroom has a microwave. We ask that each heat up be no longer than 1 minute.

Please keep in mind that snacks are not designed to take the place of meals. They serve as a supplement to the child's food intake for that day. Please notify the appropriate Program Director of any dietary restrictions or food allergies your child may have. An Individual Care Plan will need to be completed.

G. Withdrawal from Program

A minimum of 2 weeks notice must be given to the program director in, prior to the withdrawal. You will be responsible for fees until the last day or your child's attendance or until the end of the 2 week period. Notice of withdrawal should be made in writing using a Child Care Change Form or email. Please allow 3 business days for changes in schedule.

H. Payment Policy

A \$50.00 registration fee is due annually at the time of registration. Tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month and will be charged to the credit card used for registration unless you call the Financial Aid Administrator to make other payment arrangements. Automatic credit card payments can be set up at the time of registration.

If making payment with a check, please remember to write your child's first and last name on the check memo each month. Child Care payments that are made by check are to be left in the lock box located at the Front Desk of the Main YMCA or the YMCA Learning Center. If paying by cash, please obtain a receipt from the front desk or childcare before placing funds in the lock box. Please indicate on the envelope your child's first and last name and program attending so the payment can be properly applied to your account.

Parents can access payment records via their online YMCA account. Receipts for tax purposes are also available through their online account.

Payment is still required when your child is out sick or on vacation. An exception may be made if a child is out of the program due to a prolonged illness. The Childcare Director must be notified at the beginning of the absence. Credit will be given at the Director's discretion. We do not give credit or refunds for vacations.

School Age Child Care payments are due on a monthly basis. The yearly tuition is based on 180 days of school and is broken down into 10 equal payments. The monthly payment is not related to the number of school days in the month.

In the case of late payment or unpaid invoices, after three or more attempts by phone or email, if parents/guardians do not have a payment plan or are not making payments towards their balance, childcare will be put on hold. We reserve the right to terminate memberships and program enrollment for continued lack of communication.

SECTION 2.1 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

A. Sign In and Out

In compliance with state regulations, all children must be signed in and out each day. Unless otherwise informed staff will sign children in and out daily.

B. Authorized Pickups

To comply with state regulations and for your child's safety, children will only be released to those individuals that are listed on the authorized pick-up list on the child's file. Anyone on the authorized pick up list must be at least 16 years of age and able to present a correct photo ID when picking up a child in any of our child care programs. If staff do not recognize the person picking up a child (including parents) they will be asked to show ID. This is done for the safety and security of each child in our program.

The Southington and Cheshire Learning Centers and Main YMCA building are secure facilities. All families are issued a code for building access. We ask that you please keep your code confidential. Parents, guardians and staff are the only individuals that should have codes to enter our building. We do request that children do not enter the family code.

C. Late Pickups

Please make every effort to pick up your child at the end of a program. There will be staffing of at least two staff 18 years or older on site.

If for any reason you feel you may be late, please try to make arrangements to have an authorized individual pick up your child. If you arrive late a fee of \$10 for every 15 minutes or portion thereof will be charged to your account. Upon your late arrival you will be asked to sign a late pick up form which will be returned to the YMCA for billing purposes. Continued lateness may jeopardize your child's spot in the program. This policy applies to all child care programs.

D. Child Not Picked Up

If a child has not been picked up 15 minutes after the program closes, the staff will contact the child's parent or legal guardian. If they are unable to reach you and your

child is not picked up within 30 minutes, emergency contacts will be called. After 45 minutes, if staff is still unable to contact an authorized person to pick up your child, they will contact the Police Department. This applies to all child care programs.

E. Absences

If your child is going to be absent from any School Age Childcare program, please notify the coordinators by contacting the site cell phone and leaving a message. If your child is going to be absent from any Early Childhood program, please notify the Director or call the front desk to be directed to the hallway phone.

SECTION 2.2 LEGAL CUSTODY OR INJUNCTIONS

We require a copy of the legal custodial agreement, court ordered custody decree or injunction and an Individual Care Plan in situations when parents are unable to pick up their children. If a parental custody agreement has not been determined, 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.

SECTION 2.3 PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in the care of the YMCA, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order or Restraining Order) the YMCA must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments in addition to a YMCA special care plan. The orders of the court will be strictly enforced.

In the absence of a court order on file with the YMCA, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The YMCA cannot, without a court order, limit access of one parent regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the YMCA suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. The YMCA staff will contact the Cheshire Police should a conflict arise.

Visitors (other than parents) are asked to schedule appointments with the Director and are allowed in the facility only at the discretion of the Director. An employee of the YMCA will accompany visitors at all times throughout the center.

SECTION 2.4 CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable to the season. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately during the winter months so they may participate in outdoor play. For all full day Early Childhood programs please provide a change of clothing and shoes to be kept in your child's classroom. All children's clothing should be labeled with their name. The YMCA is not responsible for damaged or dirty clothing due to program activities. During summer months closed toe shoes with a strap must be worn for safety when playing outside. Flip flops and crocs are not allowed.

SECTION 2.5 INCLEMENT WEATHER

The YMCA reserves the right to close the program site due to severe weather conditions such as hurricane, tornado, snow, etc.

- If there is a delayed opening or a closing in the public schools due to inclement weather, then our Preschool will open at 8:00am instead of 6:30am. In the event that Cheshire Public Schools have an early dismissal we will provide care until 6:00PM, unless otherwise informed. For the safety of the children and staff we do encourage parents to pick up as soon as possible.
- In the event of a two hour school delay morning care programs open at 8:00am.
- Before/After Care will be cancelled on days that school is cancelled.
- In the event of an *emergency/weather related* early dismissal, there is NO aftercare at school site locations.

SECTION 2.6 PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer in Preschool. Parents may read in the classroom, assist teachers and help to coordinate special events. Teachers will post any volunteer opportunities available.

SECTION 2.7 BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you are having a birthday party for your child at home, invitations passed out at the YMCA must include all of the children in your child's class. If you plan to invite only a few children from the YMCA, the invitations must be mailed.

Birthday celebrations may include:

- Bringing in non-food items (age appropriate) for celebrating such as crayons, stickers, books etc.
- Visiting your child's classroom/site to be a guest reader.
- Donating games/supplies/books to your child's class or site in their honor.
- Engaging students in a special activity.

If there is a celebration with food, it will be done with careful planning by administration.

SECTION 3: HEALTH POLICIES

SECTION 3.1 REQUIRED HEALTH RECORDS

Early Childhood: A current health form must be kept on file for each child in the program and must be provided by the parents before the start of the school year. The form is valid for one year from the date of your child's exam.

All Early Childhood students (*60 months and younger*) must have a completed and updated flu shot form given between September and December. This form must be on file by December 31st. Should a health form expire, your child will remain out of our program until a new health form has been provided (there will be no adjustment to tuition during the lapse in child care).

School Age Childcare: A current health form must be kept on file for each child in the program. A new health form must be provided when the child is entering Kindergarten and entering 7th grade. Should there be a change in a health form such as new allergy or health conditions please provide us with an updated health form.

SECTION 3.2 ILLNESS POLICY

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in our program:

Temperature of 100 degrees or higher, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, head lice, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes of unknown origin or the presence of a contagious disease.

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during the day. It is expected that if a child leaves the YMCA he/she will remain at home the full next day to ensure complete recovery. The center is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during the day and parents cannot be reached.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occurred 3 or more times in a 24-hour period. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

A child will be allowed to return to school if he/she has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours.

Once a parent has been notified, the child should be picked up from the YMCA within one hour. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick up their child within one hour, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. If a parent is unable to be reached, the staff will begin to call people listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

If a child is well enough to attend school, he/she will be expected to participate in swimming and/or outdoor activities. Our center is not equipped to accommodate children who cannot participate in an activity. Children cannot be transferred to another classroom due to state ratios. They must fully participate in their assigned classroom's daily activities.

If your child is absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Administrator. This enables us to keep track of any illness that may occur at school. This information will only be shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis. If your child has a communicable disease we will share the nature of the disease with the parents in the center and the symptoms to look for. No child's name will be released to the other parents.

If a child contracts louse (lice), parents will be notified immediately to pick up their child. To return to the program, proof of treatment must be provided. Child must be re-treated after seven days and cleared. Specific details regarding lice are available at the YMCA Learning Center.

SECTION 3.3 ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

A. Requirements for Administering Medications (prescription and non-prescription)

YMCA staff will only administer medications with the appropriate doctor's order. The parental responsibilities include providing the center the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the center or on our website. The medication form must contain all necessary information as required by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Forms will be checked by administrative staff upon arrival to make sure they are complete. At least one dose of the medication must have been administered outside the program without adverse side effects.

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and must include the original prescription label. The label should include the child's name, name of prescription,

date of prescription, and directions for use. Medication must be within the expiration date and must match the doctor's order exactly. Except for non-prescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. Epi-pens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medication will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed.

The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited in the documentation are:

- Name, address and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date and time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medications errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Parents will be notified by (means of communication) when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medications shall be returned to the parent/guardian or disposed of, in the presence of at least one witness, if it is not picked up within one week following the termination or the order. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed which shall be signed by both parties.

B. Requirements for Administering Non-Prescription Topical Medications

The YMCA will administer topical non-prescription medications, such as sunscreens, bug repellents, skin lotions with a completed *Authorization for Administration of Non-Prescription Topical Medication form* signed by the parent or guardian. The product should be labeled with child's name and be within the products expiration date.

C. Medication Petition Policy

Depending on types of medication and their applications, the YMCA and our nurse consultant may have to petition the state which may delay the registration process. This includes but is not limited to diabetic and seizure care plans and medications.

SECTION 3.4 INDIVIDUAL CARE PLANS (ICP)

If your child has special health care or developmental needs, you will need to complete the appropriate individual care plan for your child. Care plans will be required for severe allergies, asthma, seizure disorders, chronic illness, specific dietary needs, hearing or visual impairments,

history of a contagious disease or specific behaviors such as developmental delays or court documentation relating to custody and or pick up of children. If your child has any individual care needs that require an accommodation, parents should make a request for accommodation in writing with the appropriate program director.

For all custody agreements provide the YMCA with a copy of any legal court documentation and a care plan to keep on file. This form is used to ensure all staff caring for your child are aware of his/her specific needs.

SECTION 3.5 INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS

If a child is injured during program hours, a staff person certified in first aid will treat the child if the injury is minor. If the injury is of a serious nature and emergency care is needed, the YMCA will take necessary steps to secure emergency medical treatment and parents will be notified. Emergency personnel will determine which emergency treatment center to transport the child to.

Should your child be injured during the day, an injury report will be completed by a staff member. You will be asked to review the report and sign off that you have been notified of the injury and given a copy of the form. A staff will be able to discuss the matter with you at pick-up time.

SECTION 4: EMERGENCIES

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS/ACTUAL EMERGENCIES

We conduct monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the exit. Immediately the group will walk to their site/program specific designated location safely away from the building to take a name to face attendance. YMCA staff will be responsible for taking the sign in/out sheets, portable first aid kits, cell phone and emergency files with them. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a real emergency, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the exit. Immediately the group will walk to their site/program specific designated location safely away from the building to take a name to face attendance. YMCA staff will be responsible for taking the sign in/out sheets, portable first aid kits, cell phone and emergency files with them. Should it not be possible to return to the program area, staff will walk the children to the site specific alternative safe location. Parents will be notified of any change in location. During this time, parents may not sign children into or out of the program.

The YMCA does not transport children unless it is through our designated transportation service; New Britain Transportation.

SECTION 5: BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

SECTION 5.1 POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

At the YMCA, we believe in the concept of "Positive Discipline." Through generous praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement, the motivation for most misbehavior can be eliminated. However, some discipline situations may arise. The teacher will discuss the

situation with the child and any other children involved. If this does not work, the teacher will try to redirect the negative behavior. If the behavior persists, the teacher will then allow the child some time away from the activity.

Prevention is the most powerful tool for managing discipline in a large program. A program environment that encourages freedom of movement, choices of activity, and clear boundaries prevents behavior problems. Each program must set clear expectations, adults who model appropriate communication and problem-solving strategies, and activities that teach and encourage children to discuss problems and deal effectively with anger. A quality and well-run program has a team of staff members who are calm, use appropriate language, help children work through problem solving steps and use reflective and active listening techniques. There will be continuous supervision by staff during any discipline action.

We specifically prohibit abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment. Physical restraint is prohibited unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

SECTION 5.2 BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

To prevent discipline situations YMCA staff will do the following:

1. Children will be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Children will assist staff in developing the rules for the program.
3. Program rules will be posted so both children and parents can see them.
4. Staff will review the rules as needed with the group and individually.

The following techniques may be used to help modify children's behaviors:

- Changing the setting
- Giving consequences
- Diverting attention
- Encouragement
- Giving choices
- Reinforcing positive behavior
- Encouraging the use of words to express feelings
- Giving reasons
- Appropriate humor
- Setting limits
- Encouraging better conflict resolution techniques
- Using positives
- Redirecting behavior
- Warnings

SECTION 5.3 LOW-TOLERANCE BEHAVIORS

Low-tolerance behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Biting
- Hitting an adult, teacher or staff in our program (aggressive and intentional)
- Risk of flight (attempting to run or running out of the classroom or program area, not to be confused with disassociating from a group or activity)
- Consistent profanity
- Physical harm to another child, teacher or staff
- Threats of harm to self, others or administrative staff

- Continual disruption of class (when your child requires continual one on one attention and redirection throughout the day and is jeopardizing the quality educational programming of others).
- If a child cannot be regulated and return to class/program within 30 minutes the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up.

The staff will use the discipline procedure outlined in the behavior modification section of this handbook and observe the child to determine what may provoke the inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control the behavior. Because our goal is to develop, not dismiss, a child may be given an opportunity to correct the behavior after a consequence has been served. Limited chances may be given in low tolerance behavior situations.

Any instances of low tolerance behaviors will be documented and kept on file for review. A copy will be given to parents for signature. In the event of a serious threat of violence to children or staff, a director will determine appropriate steps of action. Directors will also determine future participation in the program.

Guidelines for behavior are just that – guidelines and not rigid rules. If staff believes that a situation exists that possess a direct threat of immediate physical harm to the child, to other children or to staff, the Director may make the decision to immediately suspend or to expel the child

SECTION 5.4 PAYMENT FOR EQUIPMENT DAMAGES

Parents will be held responsible for payment of replacement equipment or repairs to property that has been damaged by their child as a result of inappropriate behavior.

SECTION 5.5 SUSPENSION POLICY

There are times in which a child's behavior is harmful verbally or physically to other children or staff in the program. At these times the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will meet with the child and their family to develop a behavior agreement.
2. The agreement will address what steps staff have already taken to help the child with their negative behavior including behavior charts, incentive program or special privileges.
3. The agreement will also outline which behaviors will not be tolerated and consequences for continuing them. Suspension from the program will be determined by the Director.

In the event that a child needs to be picked up, we will notify parent 1 and then parent 2. If contact is made, the child needs to be picked up within 1 hour. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will make a second attempt in 15 minutes. If parents are unable to be reached, we will attempt to contact an authorized emergency pickup as indicated on the child's registration. Once an alternate pick up person is contacted, the expectation is that they will pick up within as soon as possible.

When possible, parents will be provided with two weeks' notice to make alternative care arrangements. The YMCA reserves the right to terminate without notice when the safety of children or staff is threatened by the attendance of a child.

SECTION 5.6 DISMISSAL OF A CHILD

Children enrolled in our program begin with a 90-day probationary period. During this time staff will observe the child's behavior, emotional needs and their ability to adapt in a healthy manner to the structure of the program. If during this period the program cannot meet the needs of the child, parents will be required to remove the child from the program.

Parents will be required to remove a child from the program if:

- The child is not fully and independently potty trained.
- The child is a danger to him/herself, to the other children in the program, or to the staff.
- The parents refuse to follow the program policies as described in this handbook.
- The child cannot adapt in a manner that will encourage healthy growth and development or whose needs cannot be met with the resources available to the program.
- If special accommodations for the care of a child is made that:
 - Can no longer be met with the available resources
 - Is not consistent with the policies, program philosophy or practices of the YMCA

If a child is dismissed from our program, parents will be refunded any unused tuition.

SECTION 5.7 BULLYING STATEMENT

With the influence of state guidelines, local school systems and community consultants, the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA defines bullying as follows:

Bullying is any obvious and premeditated act by a child or group of children directed towards another child with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other child while in a YMCA program or event. These acts are targeted towards the same child over a continuous period of time.

Bullying behavior by any child at a YMCA program is strictly prohibited. This conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or permanent dismissal from our YMCA program or programs.

Children and parents may file verbal or written reports of suspected bullying behavior. We encourage these reports to be made to the Program Director. Children are permitted to anonymously report suspected acts of bullying to the YMCA staff and/or YMCA Program Directors. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed.

If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the person consistent with his/her right of due process. Both the suspected bully's parent and the bullying victim's parent will be notified.

Dishonest and fabricated claims of bullying to discredit or harm another child or family will also be reviewed and taken seriously.

SECTION 6 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

A. MANDATED REPORTERS

All YMCA staff members are required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Public

Health. An oral report will be made within 12 hours of the suspicion and a written report within 48 hours.

Child Abuse includes: any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning), any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation), neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision) emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth) or at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

If a child's abuse is so severe that it requires medical attention, an ambulance may be called. The child will be accompanied by two staff people. By enrolling your child in our program, you are giving your permission for our staff to transport your child under this circumstance.

Leaving child unsupervised in place of public accommodation or motor vehicle.

Connecticut State Law

Sec. 53-21a Leaving child unsupervised in place of accommodation or motor vehicle.

- (a) Any parent/guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor
- (b) Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation, which holds a permit issued under chapter 545 for the sale of alcoholic liquor for consumption on the premises, for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class D felony.
- (c) Any parent guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of any child under the age of twelve years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodations or a motor vehicle between the hours of eight o'clock p.m. and six o'clock a.m. for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a class C felony. (P.A. 97-298.)

The YMCA also takes many precautions to hire quality staff to care for children in our programs. We strive to create an environment where potential abusers will choose not to pursue employment due to the lack of opportunity for individual contact with children and the likelihood of discovery and negative consequences if such an attempt occurred. We have a stringent screening system to eliminate applications with various risk factors. We provide child abuse training to all our Child Development staff within six months of employment and once a year after that.

B. OUTSIDE CARE POLICY

The YMCA prohibits its staff from providing outside care services to YMCA members and program participants. Outside Care Services are defined as babysitting, instruction or tutoring, giving swim lessons, life-guarding, transportation, etc. that are provided off YMCA premises and, on the employee's, own time.

SECTION 7 CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Within the YMCA, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of the YMCA who have a 'need to know' in order to most appropriately and safely care for your

child. Confidential and sensitive information about YMCA staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as the YMCA strives to protect everyone's right of privacy.

Outside of the YMCA, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided by law. You may observe children at our center who have special needs or who exhibit a behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting etc.), please remember those are low tolerance behaviors and are being addressed. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of the YMCA are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

We assess your child's developmental progress in our program through staff observation. We use this information to formulate lesson plans, guide themes and create an individualized educational plan for your child. Assessment records are confidential and will only be shared with the teachers in your child's class, the Child Care Director and the child's parents.

SECTION 8 PERSONAL ITEMS

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and possible loss, children are discouraged from bringing in toys from home unless specifically requested. iPad, iPod, leap frogs and music players, personal games and toys are also not permitted unless specifically requested with the understanding that the YMCA is not responsible for items lost or stolen. For preschool these electronics may be permitted with parent's permission for rest time. All electronics must have headphones so as to not disturb others.

Cell phones are not permitted for regular use for school age students.

SECTION 9 YMCA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility – they guide everything we do. The preceding diversity and inclusion statement was approved by the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs Board of Directors on October 25, 2017.

SECTION 10 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SECTION 10.1 HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

Preschool is in session year-round. Preschool hours are 6:30AM-6:00PM. Preschool options include M-F, MWF or T/TH.

Holidays and Closures

Early Childhood programs will not operate on the following days: Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. We will also close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA Childcare programs will be closed for professional development on Columbus Day, President's Day and the day before school starts.

SECTION 10.2 ENROLLMENT

Enrollment is rolling on a space available basis. If you are requesting a start date after October 1 please contact the program director. Children must be a minimum of 2 years and 8 months by December 31 to enroll in preschool. After December 31 children must be 3 years of age to start. A \$50 non-refundable annual registration fee is due at the time of registration.

SECTION 10.3 CURRICULUM AND DAILY ACTIVITIES

Our curriculum for Preschool is based on the State of Connecticut's Preschool Framework and Assessment Goals as well as The Early Learning Development Standards. These approaches are based upon the most recent educational research and are generally recognized as the standard practice for educating young children.

The core of our curriculum is to balance both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. All of this is done through well planned learning and activity centers including: Library (language), Blocks (construction), Music and Movement, Art, Sand & Water (sensory), Outdoor learning, Cooking, Science, Math, and Physical Education activities daily. Each day brings new learning opportunities as children are provided a framework within which they will make both self-directed and guided choices. We also incorporate problem solving experiences that facilitate concept formation, language development and sensory discrimination. Language and learning experiences provide opportunities for spontaneous conversation, as well as experiences with books, poems, stories and songs. All experiences are designed to promote self-reliance and build self-esteem.

We strive to meet and enhance the individual needs of the diverse population of children including cultural, language and developmental differences.

A detailed daily schedule will be posted in each classroom at the beginning of the school year. Please note, the daily schedule is subject to change as sometimes we host special events or as the child's interests may dictate. Our daily schedule for Preschool includes:

- **Center Play**- Children will choose activities in various centers. Centers change and may include: dramatic play, block play, science/nature, manipulatives, writing, library, art, math and music centers.
- **Creative Expression**-Activities are done in small groups and the emphasis is on the process not the product. Creative experiences allow the children opportunity to develop and express their own ideas and feelings in all parts of the program. When children enjoy the creative experience, the end product is always beautiful.
- **Art**- Art is an important part of our curriculum. Every day, children find a variety of art materials available on our shelves. Drawing, painting, pasting, molding, and constructing are not only enjoyable but also provide important opportunities for learning. Children recognize original ideas and feelings, improve their coordination, learn to recognize colors and textures, and develop creativity and pride in their accomplishments by exploring and using art materials.
- **Circle/Group Time**- This is a time to discuss the day's activities. This allows children to experience large group activities and build on their communication and cooperation skills.
- **Physical Activities**- Each day the children will spend time in the gym or outdoors. The gym or all-purpose room has mats, tricycles, balance beams, ramps, climbing equipment, etc. Children will have the opportunity for outside play weather permitting.
- **Quiet/Nap Time**-Children in preschool for a full day are required by State licensing to have a rest or relaxing time. Cots are provided, and children rest for a time after

lunch. Children can quietly look at books or nap during this time. No child will be forced to sleep. The general guidelines below pertain to preschool 4 year olds.

- September-January nap time is 1.5 hours
- January-May nap time is decreased to 1 hour
- In May nap time is decreased to 30 minutes
- Field Trips/Special Events-On occasion, we may plan a field trip or special event. Notification will be sent home and permission is granted at registration. An additional cost may be involved.

****At all times (indoor/outdoor) children will be supervised maintaining state-required ratios. At no time will a child be left unsupervised. ****

SECTION 10.4 COMMUNICATION

A successful program cannot exist without effective communication with your family. At the YMCA, we value your input and support and welcome your participation. This may include spending some time at the program with your child, sharing a special hobby or talent with the class, attending our family events or communicating with the teachers about any concerns, comments or suggestions you may have. Parents may visit our Child Development programs at any time. We do ask that you limit your visit to 20-30 minutes.

As for the YMCA, our efforts to promote successful communication include:

- Asking staff to be available to greet and talk to parents before and after school.
- Displaying a "Parent's Bulletin Board" with notices, special events and articles of interest to preschool families.
- Sending home regular newsletters to inform you of our activities and plans for the future.
- Planning family events throughout the year.
- Scheduling parent-staff conferences whenever needed or requested.
- White Boards are posted outside of classrooms/site locations for daily updates.
- Daily Sheets are optional and are provided in the preschool classrooms for specific communication regarding your child's day including the child's time at home i.e....did they sleep well the night before. It also has information regarding naptime and daily activities.
- Remind.com for updates etc.

Preschool offers parent conferences 2-3 times a year. Written notice indicating the exact dates and times will be sent home in the newsletter when the conferences are approaching. The conferences are a time when teachers can discuss your child's developmental progress at length with you. Parents are always welcome to request a conference at any time during the year.

SECTION 10.5 WHAT TO BRING

- **Lunch**- the Office of Early Childhood requires that all lunches contain an ice pack. If your child's lunch needs to be heated up, the classroom has a microwave. We ask that each heat up be no longer than 1 minute.
- **Nap**- a crib sheet (optional), travel size blanket and pillow, small stuffed animal
- **Clothing**: an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes to remain on site- including underwear, socks and shoes.
- Your child's teacher will let you know if there are any additional items needed.

SECTION 10.6 CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Each year administration and teachers work closely to determine classroom placements. To create the best learning environment for all students, there are many factors to be considered when classes are being formed which include but are not limited to, individual student strengths, challenges, personalities and special accommodations. We value your thoughts and insights about your child but ask that you trust our professional judgement. If you feel that we may need additional information when creating balanced classrooms, we recommend that you write a letter outlining your child's learning style and needs but avoid requesting a specific teacher. All information regarding your child will be read and taken into consideration during this process but please keep in mind that no guarantees can be made. It would be impossible to honor all requests for all students in early childhood while maintaining balanced classrooms. We have the best interests of each student at the Y at heart and greatly appreciate your understanding.

SECTION 11 SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SECTION 11.1 HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The School Age Program follows the Cheshire Public School calendar for vacations and holidays.

- Before School Care runs from 6:30AM until the start of school.
- After Care runs from the time of dismissal (including planned half days) to 6:00PM.

School Vacation Days and Inclement Weather Days

- If school is not in session due to a holiday or school vacation, Fun Days are held at the Norton School unless otherwise posted. Fun Days run from 6:30AM to 6:00PM. Pre-registration is required and is not covered in the monthly tuition. Registration can be completed online. Funday registration closes at 5:00PM two business days before the scheduled day.
- If school is delayed in the morning, morning care will begin at 8:00AM.
- On early dismissal days children will be dismissed to After Care. Programming will run until 6:00PM.
- In the event of a ½ day due to inclement weather there will be **NO** aftercare.
- Fundays will not operate on the following holidays; Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. The Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA Childcare programs will be closed for professional development on Columbus Day, President's Day and the day before school starts.

Summer Program Offerings

During the summer vacation, the YMCA School Age Child Care program will not be in session. The YMCA holds two exciting summer options: YMCA Camp Quinnipiac and YMCA Camp Sloper. For more information and registration links for either camp, please visit our website www.sccymca.org.

SECTION 11.2 AVAILABLE SEAT PETITION

The Cheshire Board of Education requires that all families fill out an available seat petition form even when they will be attending YMA before or after care. The form is available on our website or from the Board of Education directly.

It is the responsibility of the parent or Legal guardian to notify the child's school office as well as the child's teacher that the child will be attending YMCA Before and/or After Care explaining what exact care the child will be doing with the YMCA.

If your child will be out for the day, please contact the respective site by phone. Leave a detailed message and contact information if needed. The site numbers are located on the front page of this handbook.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Program's Director.

SECTION 11.3 DAILY ACTIVITIES

Our curriculum for school age is based on incorporating activities that promote learning new skills, making friends and increasing vital traits such as self- esteem. This makes for confident kids today and contributing and engaged adult's tomorrow. Our daily activities include sports, arts and crafts, quiet games, science projects, group games, homework time, indoor and outdoor creative free play and possible service learning projects.