



# **METROWEST YMCA**

## **School's Out and Summer Day Camps Family Handbook**

### **MetroWest Y Mission Statement**

The MetroWest Y is dedicated to providing programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

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# Section One – School’s Out and Camp Policies

## I Overview

### A Advancing Equity – Nondiscrimination Policy

The MetroWest Y embraces its responsibility to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization that intentionally promotes inclusion in all aspects, ensures and sustains diverse representation in our leadership, and leads social change in our communities through anti-racist policies, words, and actions. The MetroWest Y as a community embraces and acknowledges our responsibility to create and maintain an environment that affirms the diversity of people and ideas. Together we strive to achieve and provide access and equity regardless of ability (including toilet training status), age, citizenship, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, marital status, national origin, race, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, ability to pay and veteran status. Through our programs, services, facilities, and collaborations, the Y values and champions the aspirations of all.

In an effort to ensure that all children and families are welcome and comfortable in our programs, holidays and cultural celebrations are not observed in our Early Learning Center, School’s Out sites, or summer learning programs. We encourage children to discuss special events and meaningful parts of their lives while they are at the Y, but the staff team does not design any activities or introduce concepts that are not inclusive and relevant to all the children. It is our intention that no child or family should ever feel excluded or devalued.

### B Licensing Information

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses School’s Out, Camp OCP, and Y STEAM Camp. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) through local Boards of Health regulate our other day camps. These programs are mandated to uphold all the EEC or DPH rules and regulations pertaining to group day care or recreational camp licensing. The EEC regional office responsible for the program is located at 324-R Clark Street, Worcester, MA 01609. The phone number is (508) 798-5180. Families may contact EEC for information regarding the program’s regulatory compliance history. Information regarding the regulatory compliance history for summer camp programs can be found at the Boards of Health for each community.

## II Children’s Rights and Responsibilities

### A Y Staff Members’ Responsibilities

Y staff members are responsible for ensuring that children enrolled:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards.
- Have use of all the equipment and space on an equal basis; materials will be functioning and clean condition.
- Have their ideas and feelings respected.
- Guided into appropriate behavior using positive guidance strategies that are fair, equal, and respectful.

- Have opportunity to express their emotions such as joy, anger, frustration, and disappointment in an appropriate manner.
- Have activities that allow participants to express their creative ability, as they explore and discover, while developing to their fullest potential.
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: fine and gross motor, quiet, indoor, outdoor, active, and passive areas, creative, dramatic play, and exploration.
- Have a right to voice their opinion on the rules and give input on activities offered.
- Have staff that care about them, enjoy being with them and help them grow.
- Be treated with care, honesty, respect, and responsibility - the core values of the Y.

## **B Children's Responsibilities**

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to accept consequences for their own actions.
  - Displaying the Y character development traits of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
  - Respecting the rules that the staff and children established together.
  - Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone.
  - Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property.
  - Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program.
  - Returning materials and equipment to the place they found them and before they start a different activity or go home.
  - Participating in and committing to complete activities
  - When appropriate, wear seat belts or use booster seats while on the Y vehicles.
  - Behaving in a manner, while in the Y vehicle, which allows maximum concentration of the driver.
- The Y will suspend transportation privilege for children who do not behave appropriately and safely.

## **III General Policies and Procedures**

### **A Child Guidance**

The goal of our child guidance plan is to minimize opportunities for challenging behaviors, suspension, and/or exclusionary measures, as well as to help children develop tools to make good decisions about resolving conflicts and solving problems so that children can demonstrate respect for each other and their environment as well as ensure the safety and security of everyone involved.

We use a positive approach that respects the child to support individual behavior management. Y staff actively incorporate communication, social, and emotional regulation skills into the curriculum to guide children in using appropriate behavior rather than focusing only on reducing challenging behaviors. We address discipline procedures individually, usually with a natural consequence that is associated with the situation and incorporates the teaching of a more positive alternative and does not include any circumstances when it is permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child.

Y staff members observe children to assess the function of the behavior and to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that predict or contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. Once we find these negative behavior triggers, Y staff explore ways to minimize their impact to promote positive behaviors by the children through the modification of the environment or activities as well as provide adult or peer support.

When a staff member has identified a challenging behavior that has impacted the safety or learning opportunities within the environment, the Inclusion Team will observe the child in attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the function and intent of the behavior. The Inclusion Team may set up a meeting with the child's family to learn more about strategies that are successful in the home that could integrate into the program, as well as speak with other partners that already work with the child such as therapists, specialists, and previous providers. The Inclusion Team will share with the child's family an Individualized Child Plan (ICP) that includes specific positive behavior support strategies for the staff members to utilize when working with the child. This plan will be re-evaluated by the Inclusion Team on a regular basis to assess effectiveness and to update as needed.

We provide formal training on positive classroom/group management during our professional development days as well as incorporate specific learning opportunities for staff in their individual professional development plans. The Inclusion Team members and program leadership also coach and monitor staff members to implement positive classroom/group management techniques in the program. The strategies incorporate the entire group to ensure maximum impact, and may include group transition warnings, creating or minimizing options for independent play, visual cues, routines, or where the staff member stands/sits in the room to ensure proper monitoring.

## **1 Methods of Guidance Approved for Y Staff Members**

Y staff members address challenging behavior by assessing the function of the child's behavior, determining positive behavior supports and interventions, and when necessary, collaborating with families and professionals to develop individualized behavior support plans to develop the child's plan for success.

Staff help children manage their behavior and regulate their emotions by guiding and supporting children to:

- Persist when frustrated
- Play cooperatively with others
- Use language to communicate needs
- Learn turn taking
- Gain control of physical impulses
- Express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
- Use problem-solving techniques
- Learn about self and others

When a challenging behavior occurs, staff respond to the child in a way that is safe for the child and others in the group, is calm, is respectful, and maintains the dignity of the child. The staff member then determines what approach to take based on three behavioral categories: unskillful, inappropriate, or unacceptable.

Unskillful behavior: An unskillful behavior occurs when the child does not have the knowledge of how or when to behave in a specific situation. In these situations, the staff member will work with the child to teach the appropriate behavior, practice the behavior, and then assist them in using the behavior in the appropriate way. For example: A child grabs a toy from another child. The staff member would help the child with the skills to ask the other child if they can share the toy.

**Inappropriate behavior:** An inappropriate behavior is an unwanted behavior that does not match the context of the situation (wrong time, wrong place). When a child exhibits an inappropriate behavior, staff members will help the child substitute a different behavior that does not match the current situation. For example: A child yelling during circle time. The staff member will remind the child of the expected behaviors during circle time, review circle time expectations, and potentially share when yelling is acceptable such as when playing outside. The staff member will praise the child when the child demonstrates appropriate volume level at circle time.

**Unacceptable behavior:** An unacceptable behavior is when the child has “crossed the line” humiliating another child or jeopardizing the safety and well-being of the group. When a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, the team will convene immediately to determine a positive behavior support plan in collaboration with the family and professionals when appropriate. For example: a child runs away from the group or space and runs into the parking lot which creates an unsafe situation for the child, the staff members who are following the child, and the other children in the group who now have less supervision and support. The team will continue to monitor or adjust the plan based on the child’s behaviors.

In problematic situations where children exhibit persistent, serious, and unacceptable behaviors, staff members, families, and the Y’s Inclusion team will partner as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success both at home and at the Y. When necessary, the child may need additional supports or an alternative placement.

## **2 Prohibited Methods of Behavior Management**

Staff may NEVER use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. The following methods of discipline are examples of strictly prohibited actions:

- No spanking, shaking, hitting, squeezing, biting, pulling any body part including hair, or other forms of corporal punishment.
- No cruel, unusual, or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, abusive treatment including shaming, ridiculing, threatening, frightening, ostracizing, or secluding.
- No rough handling, physical restraint, or forcing a child to perform an action such as cleaning.
- No denial of meals or snacks, drink, rest, or bathroom facilities as punishment.
- No punishment related to eating or not eating food including no force-feeding.
- No punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting.
- No time-outs or similar approaches where children are isolated for a specific amount of time based on their ages. At the MetroWest YMCA, children may need to leave the group or their activity until they can demonstrate that they can make appropriate decisions about their behaviors. Staff members help the children explore the situation as a learning experience so that the children can make more appropriate decisions in the future.

Any Y staff that violates any of the prohibited methods listed above will be immediately suspended until Department of Children and Families (DCF) and, if appropriate, Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) complete further investigation.

In all cases, suspension, and/or expulsion of a child from the MetroWest YMCA is the final decision of the MetroWest YMCA President or his designee. Although a last resort, suspension may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child and of others in the group.

### **3 Child Guidance Procedure**

In problematic situations where children exhibit persistent, serious, and unacceptable behaviors, staff members, families, and the Y's Inclusion team will partner together to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success both at home and at the Y. The Y will often encourage the external consultations or evaluations by behavioral health professionals, special education departments of public schools, early intervention, or others to provide additional insight and recommendations for how to meet the child's needs.

Sometimes, we may need to ask the family to withdraw the child from the program—

- If the concerning behaviors have not diminished.
- If the problematic incident is the final incident in a succession of aggressive behaviors that are harmful to the child and/or other children/staff at the program.
- If it is determined that we are unable to provide the services that the child requires (i.e., special language or speech support, additional staffing, etc.).

If this situation occurs, we will consider re-enrollment of the child after this phase has passed.

### **B Special Needs**

We encourage families with children who have special needs to meet with the Director of Inclusion prior to registration to discuss what the child needs to be successful in our programs. When possible, we would like to review documentation including the identification of specific accommodations required to meet the needs of the child, which would include change or modification in the child's participation in regular activities as well as identification of any special equipment, materials, ramps, or aids. If we expect the accommodations to cause undue burden on the program, we will notify the family in writing with the reasons for the decisions. Families may contact the Department of Early Education and Care to review the decision.

### **C Referral Plan**

The MetroWest YMCA has information regarding resources for multiple different resources for families. Here are the more commonly requested community supports:

#### *Counseling:*

SMOC Behavioral: (508) 879-2250

Wayside Youth and Family: (508) 879-9800

Advocates: (508) 485-9300

#### *Medical Services:*

Dr. Jeffrey Zaref, Reliant Medical Pediatrics in Framingham: (774) 778-5262

Natick Dental Partners (Pediatric Dentists): (508) 653-2417

MetroWest Medical Center: (508) 383-1000

#### *Education and Special Needs:*

Criterion Early Intervention: (508) 620-1442

Ashland Public Schools (508) 881-0150

Ashland Public Schools, Special Education Department: (508) 881-0155

Framingham Public Schools, Department of Student Registration: (508) 424-3420

Framingham Public Schools, Special Education Department: (508) 424-3458

Framingham Public Schools, Early Education: (508) 782-6898



*Social Services and Tuition Assistance:*

Department of Transitional Assistance: (508) 661-6600

Child Care Resources: (508) 796-1829

SMOC Helpline: (800) 620-2347

United Way Call Center Information & Referral Line: 211

Families should contact the program director regarding these and other referral services. They will consult with the Director of Inclusion to try to identify the most appropriate resource for the family. If a staff member develops a concern about a child based on the assessment process, the staff member will observe, record, and review the behavior before recommending a meeting with the family to discuss a potential referral. During the meeting, the Y staff will share the program's concerns and discuss the referral in a sensitive and supportive way. We keep all referrals confidential.

If a child is at least 2 ½ years of age, the Y will inform the child's family of the availability of services and their rights, including the right to appeal under Chapter 766. If a child is under the age of 2 ½ years, the Y will inform the child's family of the availability of services provided by early intervention programs.

The Y will provide families with a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a summary of the program's observations related to the referral and any efforts the program may have made to accommodate the child's needs, including the creation of an Individualized Child Plan (ICP). The Y will also offer the child's family to make the referral with written parental consent. We maintain a written record of any referrals in the child's file as well as records of conferences with family and the results. The Director of Inclusion will have contacts for the Chapter 766 and early intervention programs.

The MetroWest Care Connection (<https://mwcareconnection.info/>) provides additional resources for families with translation services available.

## **D Commitment to Partnership**

If a child comes to us with identified special needs or behavioral issues, or if these issues emerge during the course of a child's time at the Y, we work together with the child's family and other professionals, when appropriate, to determine what kinds of interventions and supports that child will need to thrive and grow. Sometimes through this process it may become apparent that a child needs more support than the Y staff is able to provide. In such circumstances, we may recommend that a child be evaluated for supports outside of the Y, such as speech and language development, or occupational therapy through Early Intervention or through the public schools. Some children may exhibit behaviors that indicate they may benefit from emotional supports such as counseling or play therapy. We are happy to work collaboratively with outside organizations and welcome professionals working with children to do so at our sites when it is appropriate and feasible.

In some cases when a child needs more support, after going through the process of evaluating and responding to a child's individual needs, we may determine that the Y programs are currently not able to meet the needs of a particular child by assessing multiple factors including:

- The child's safety and ability to access the learning environment we provide.
- Our staff's ability to provide the level of support needed by a particular child, especially if that child needs a significant amount of one-to-one support.
- The safety and wellbeing of the rest of the children in the group.
- The safety and wellbeing of our staff.

- The ability of our staff to provide a consistent and stable environment in which all the children in the group can learn and have fun.

When a particular child has needs that impact the factors above, we will need to decide if the child will be able to remain in our program. We do not see this as punishing the child or their family; we see it as coming to an understanding that we cannot meet the needs of a particular child within the perimeters of our programming. Sometimes a child may need a smaller group size, more one-one assistance than we are able to provide or may need a more specialized or therapeutic environment in which to develop the skills that they need to reach their full growth potential. We always hope to be able to come to these decisions in partnership with the child's family.

## **E Procedures to Avoid Suspension or Termination**

When possible, we use warnings and/or suspensions before terminations. We document incidents to share with families and make a reasonable effort to work with the family prior to termination when possible. We document in the child's file all referrals that we recommend or family's request.

We only consider expulsion after multiple interventions and meetings have been explored and is a last resort method. In these situations, we discuss referrals or services with the families to assist them in finding an alternative programming. Our policies are in line with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Regulations and the Department of Public Health.

Reasons for suspension and/or termination of a child from the Y include:

- Inappropriate behavior by child, considered to be harmful to the child, staff, or others (Families are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior.)
- Inappropriate behavior or language by adult family members, considered to be harmful to your child, staff members, or others (Families are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior.)
- Chronic tardiness at departure time
- Chronic absenteeism
- Overdue fees
- Other, as determined and discussed with the Director

When we ask a child to leave our program, our staff members prepare the child for departure in a manner consistent with their ability to understand, when possible. Suspension will not be for punishment or to circumvent the referral requirements and will not be in violation of the ADA.

## **F Clothing**

Children at the Y are active and involved. They should wear clothes that are seasonally appropriate, comfortable, practical, and wash easily. Although children wear paint smocks, spills and paint still can get onto their clothing. Please send your child to the program with an extra set of clothing in case of accidents/spills. And during the winter months, all children should come to the program with mittens, boots, hats, and snowsuits. To protect your child from injury while running and climbing, we ask for no sandals or flip flops. Your child's shoes should cover the toes completely and be secure on their feet.

## **G Toys and Electronics from Home**

The Y discourages children and families to bring any toys/valuables and electronics from home to the programs so that sharing does not become an issue, children can fully participate in the program, and nothing is lost or broken. The programs provide materials for activities, especially those that promote

learning and essential skills. If a child brings in a toy or other valuable to the Y, the toy will be placed in their bags until the end of the day. Children can have access to electronics needed for school such as Chromebooks when appropriate.

## **H Arrival, Departure, and Attendance Policy**

To ensure a child's safety at drop-off, family members and other authorized adults must walk the child into the site, sign the child in on the appropriate form, and make sure that a staff member is aware that the child has joined the group. Arrival and departure times provide times are also great opportunities to connect with staff members. If the staff member is busy with another family or engaged with children, feel free to wait until they have a moment or ask them to call you during the day. Families are also welcome to email the program leadership who can forward any questions to the appropriate individual.

If a child is to be absent from the Y program, families should call or email prior to the child's usual scheduled arrival at the program. If a child is absent on their regularly scheduled day, the family is still responsible for payment for Y services.

If a child arrives at a Y program without being registered, the staff member responsible for supervising arrival will connect with the appropriate Y office to determine the child's enrollment status and to share the enrollment status with the child's family before the child can stay at the program. The child will only be allowed to stay if the entire registration and enrollment process, including payment of tuition, is complete. If the process is not complete, the arrival supervisor will direct the family to the correct Y office or administrator to come to an appropriate resolution.

Attendance will be taken throughout the program hours. staff members will note any unusual arrival or departure times. All programs will repeat attendance procedures at times of transition (i.e., going to the playground, gym, etc.)

For our after school programs, if a child has not arrived within 15 minutes of the expected arrival time and we have not been able to confirm that the child is no longer expected, we will reach out to the family or emergency numbers to ensure that the family know of the child's location.

All staff members' scheduled hours revolve around the program's closing time. On certain occasions, when families are late to pick-up their child, the Y has established these firm policies:

Families must call the Y to let us know what time they will expect to arrive if they anticipate being late.

- We assessed families a \$10.00 fee for the first ten minutes, and \$5 for each five-minute interval afterward when children are still in the program after the program closes. We add late pick-up charges to the family's bill. We do not accept cash for late pick-up fees.
- In the event of consistent tardiness, the Director will meet with the family to discuss alternatives pick-up arrangements. Consistent cases of tardiness may result in your child's termination from the program.

If the Y does not receive a prior phone call from the family before the program closes and the child is still at the program, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:

- A Y staff member will contact the family for instructions. If we cannot make contact, the staff member will call the people on the emergency contact list to arrange pick-up. Late pick-up fees are still assessed and added to the family's bill.
- If the Y cannot connect with the child's family or authorized contacts after 1 hour after the program has closed, the Y will contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Emergency Unit to

report an abandoned child. Staff will then follow instructions given by DCF as to what further arrangements are necessary. Families will need to contact DCF for further instructions.

## **I Authorized Pick-Up Policy**

Prior to the child's enrollment in the Y, the parents or guardian must share the names and contact information for the people they authorize to pick up their children in DocNetwork, our online portal for managing children's information. Families must notify the Y via email if someone who is not on their child's DocNetwork profile will be picking up their child. Authorized adults must enter the program and sign out the child. For the children's safety, we will not allow any child to leave the site without an authorized person or parental authorization. Please have picture identification available. All authorized people must be at least 16 years of age.

Please be aware that if a staff member suspects you or the adult who is picking up your child to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you will need to have someone else pick-up your child. We will not release a child to anyone believed to be under the influence.

## **J Transportation**

To keep children as safe as possible, we encourage families to make sure that the child restraint system that is used for transporting children is installed correctly, designed for children of the same age and/or size, and in compliance with current Massachusetts law.

### **1 Parking**

The family members and adults listed on children's pick-up authorization forms may park in parking lots available to the public. Adults must escort all children to and from the program site. Let the supervisor know if you or your child needs assistance with this process. Please note, families must park in established parking spots and turn off their vehicle when no one is in the vehicle, even for short periods of time. Any cars parked in the fire lane will be towed at the expense of the driver.

### **2 Field Trip Transportation Plan**

Children participating in field trips will be transported in Y vehicles, public transportation, rented vehicles or transported by foot. The MetroWest YMCA is responsible for children during transportation on field trips. In the event a vehicle should break down, we will secure alternative transportation with Y vehicles or rental vehicles. All groups visiting an off-site facility will be responsible for travel first aid and emergency procedures. At least one person on the trip will be certified in first aid and CPR. For camp field trips, families will receive a written itinerary before departure.

## **K Emergency Procedures**

First aid certified staff will treat children experiencing minor injuries or illness such as bumps, bruises, scrapes, bee stings and stomach while taking note of specifications on the child's health form. Staff members will fill out accident report forms that detail the injury and the first aid provided to the child. We give copies of the form to the family and keep a copy for the program's records. If children's symptoms persist or worsen, we will contact families so that they can pick up their child early.

In case of a major emergency such as a potential head injury or broken bone, the Y will contact emergency medical services (911) to take the child by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical facility. We will share health forms from DocNetwork with EMS that include child information, medical release to seek treatment, family information and emergency numbers for authorized adults if the

parents or guardians cannot be reached. A Y staff member will accompany the child on the ambulance and stay at the emergency medical facility until a family member or authorized adult arrives.

## **L Emergency Evacuation Plan**

Each site has evacuation instructions and routes posted at each exit.

- Children will walk escorted by their staff members to the nearest exit.
- Using daily attendance records, staff members check attendance to make sure all children evacuate safely and to confirm the location of all children. The director and other program leaders leave the building after going through each room and confirming that everyone has exited the space. Each group will bring the emergency contact information for all the children, first aid kit, and attendance records during an evacuation.
- Evacuation drills take place at least monthly for EEC licensed programs and weekly for DPH summer camps. The director is responsible for assuring that evacuation/fire drills take place at various times of the program day so that all groups of children have practice. The director provides information about each evacuation location and specific procedures to all the staff. The director documents the date, time and effectiveness of each drill and maintains this documentation.

## **M Emergency Transportation Plan**

A child who is injured at the Y and needs emergency medical care will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by ambulance. Families will be immediately notified of the child's injury. If the parents or guardians cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts. A staff member will accompany the child to the nearest medical facility to await the child's family or emergency contact person.

If a child is injured at a field trip location, a staff member certified in first aid/CPR will assess the injury and instruct a fellow staff member to obtain the child's emergency contact number from the vehicle and phone an ambulance, family or emergency contact person, and the Y's administrative staff. The child will then be transported by ambulance to the designated medical facility accompanied by a staff member. The staff member will stay with the child until the child's parent, guardian, or emergency contact person arrives at the medical facility.

## **IV Health Policies**

The focus of the MetroWest YMCA School's Out and Camp programs incorporates academic learning as well as the physical and emotional aspects of your child's development. We ask for your complete cooperation in accepting the rules we have made for the health and safety of each child, and in turn we pledge to you our diligence in maintaining good practices. Please remember that by protecting someone else's child, you will also help maintain a safe environment for your own. Our full [Health Care Policies with Emergency Procedures](#) includes our full policies and procedures including:

- Healthy Children and Staff Initiatives
- Injury Prevention and Responses
- Plans for Infection Control
- Plans for Managing Illness
- Health Records and Physical Examinations
- Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policies
- Emergency Information
- Plans for Meeting Potential Emergencies
- Health Emergencies and Illnesses

Please keep your child at home if they seem listless, unusually irritable, complaints of aches, is feverish, or seems to be unusually pale or flushed. It is better to be overcautious than to risk exposing the rest of the children and staff members. The following is a guideline for you to follow in determining when to keep your child at home.

## **A When Children Should or Should Not Attend the Y**

Keep children home when they have:

- Earache
- Fever over 100.4° F
- Strep throat
- Stomachache
- Anything that is contagious, i.e., chickenpox, conjunctivitis, COVID-19.
- The child is unable to keep up with the pace of the day
- Diarrhea (3 or more loose stools within one day. Child must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before return)
- Vomiting (One or more episodes. Child must be free from vomiting for 24 hours before returning)
- Rashes that are contagious as confirmed by a physician
- Head Lice (When returning to the Y, adult family members should allow extra time for staff members to check the head of the child to ensure that there are no nits. If we find nits, the child will need to leave the program.)

Child May Come With:

- Earaches, strep throat (provided they have been on medication for 24 hours)
- Colds
- Hay fever
- Anything that is not contagious
- The child can fully participate in the day

When a child stays home due to illness, they must be symptom free, on prescription medication, or off nonprescription medication, such as Tylenol and Motrin, for at least 24 hours before returning to the Y.

Each child responds and reacts differently to sickness, so please be advised that the staff members may need to send children home if they are unable to participate and keep up with the pace of the day. Families will need to pick up children who become ill in the program. Please be aware that these guidelines are set forth to help maintain the health and safety of your child and other children as well.

Please notify the Y as soon as possible if your child is exposed to a contagious disease. The Director will notify you if it is necessary to keep your child at home. We will notify all families if a child in our program has a contagious disease. Notices will include information on symptoms and general information on the contagion.

## **B Administration of Medication**

Parents and guardians must complete a [Medication Consent Form](#) any time their child needs medication while in care. Health care practitioners must authorize in writing all prescription, oral non-prescription, unanticipated non-prescription medications and topical, non-prescription medication used for

treatment purposes. Additional information can be found in our [Health Care Policies with Emergency Procedures](#).

### **C Individual Health Care Plans**

Regulations require [Individual Health Care Plans](#) for children with chronic medical conditions diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not provided. Additional information regarding our Individual Health Care Plan requirements can be found in our [Health Care Policy with Emergency Procedures](#).

### **D Allergies**

Families MUST list any allergies to foods, chemicals, or other materials in the "Allergies" section of DocNetwork, our online child record system. Please include any reactions and treatments for the allergies. We compile allergy information on a reference list that we post in food preparation and distribution areas. Y staff refer to this list when preparing or serving food as well as working with a group.

### **E Infection Control**

Our [Health Care Policy with Emergency Procedures](#) includes the full infection control procedures that are included in new staff orientation.

### **F Nutritious Snack or Lunch Suggestions**

MetroWest YMCA provides nutritious snacks and lunches for all our children. The meals are in accordance with USDA guidelines our fruits and vegetable serving sizes will be between ¼ and ½ cup depending on age. Each snack and meal that the Y serves contains a fruit or vegetable along with another food group component(s). Grains are always 100% whole, and water and white milk are the only beverages we serve. In addition, the Y will follow family or physician's orders in relation to special diets.

Families who choose to provide their own meals for their children must provide nutritious foods in food and beverage containers with the child's name. Staff members throw away all unused food. We suggest the following items for when your child needs to bring a lunch and/or snack. A nutritious lunch would include something from all major four-food groups.

*Please note that the MetroWest YMCA cannot refrigerate or warm up lunches. We require using ice packs and thermoses.*

Sandwich Suggestions: cheese, chicken, jelly or jam, tuna, meats (turkey, ham, etc.)

Sides: Orange, apple, pear, banana, peach, dried fruit, trail mix, cucumbers, pepper strips, crackers, unsweetened yogurt, muffins, granola bars, cheese sticks.

Beverage: water, 4-6 oz. 100% fruit juice (orange, apple, grape), milk (low-fat or non-fat for children ages two and older; children under two receive whole milk)

Please note that the Y does not allow the following types of foods: fried foods, sugar sweetened beverages, and foods high in sugar such as chips, soda, juice drinks, chicken fingers, cookies, and candy.

Due to a high number of children with peanut and tree nut allergies, the program has imposed a “no peanuts or tree nuts rule.” This includes (but not limited to) foods that may contain nuts such as granola bars, trail mix, cereal, baked goods, peanut butter, and Nutella.

The Y does not allow any foods that may cause choking for children less than 4 years old such as peanut butter, celery sticks, popcorn, nuts, chicken or turkey on the bone, cherries with pits, sausages, gum, unpeeled apples, and sunflower/watermelon seeds. If you must send grapes, please cut them into small pieces.

## **G Animal and Pet Policy**

Animals provide a large array of growth and learning opportunities for children. When they are program pets or visiting animals, they must appear to be in good health. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Staff members supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when they are close to animals. We do not allow animals in areas where individuals with animal allergies are present. We do not allow reptiles as program pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

## **V Child Protection Policies**

### **A Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect Strategies**

The Y designed these preventive strategies to protect the children in Y programs and to protect Y staff and volunteers from being wrongly accused of incidences of child abuse.

- The Y has in place a comprehensive pre-employment screening procedure to screen out staff not suited for working with children.
- The Y will take any allegation or suspicion of child abuse seriously and will respond accordingly.
- Staff understand the legal obligation to report suspected abuse.
- Policies, procedures, and training are available relating to discipline, supervision, staff/participant interaction, staff, and volunteer Code of Conduct, etc.
- Staff understands what practices may be considered abusive and the difference between what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate touch.
- Defensive strategies have been identified for avoiding unfounded allegations in our yearly abuse prevention training for staff.
- Staff communicate frequently with families regarding day-to-day activities and encourage families to report or question any behavior or event their child may share that appears out of the ordinary.
- The Y encourages families to visit programs that their children attend unannounced
- Staff try to identify stressed families and offer support and referrals for help.
- Staff have learned how to discuss sensitive issues with children such as toileting, sleeping and questions about sex.
- Staff protect themselves and the Y by agreeing not to be alone with Y youth or program participants outside of Y programs or facilities (i.e., baby-sit, take children on trips, have them in their homes when others are not present, etc.).



## **B Mandated Reporting**

In order to ensure the well-being of the children in our care, our staff have a continuing duty under state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, to the Department of Children and Families and Department of Early Education and Care, and to cooperate in any investigation of such possible neglect or abuse. (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A). We do not have discretion in this matter but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including non-family members, and we may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm. Moreover, in grievous cases, we may refer the matter directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney as well.

As a licensed provider of early learning and out-of-school time programs, Massachusetts State Law mandate us to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. If a case of child abuse is suspected by a staff member or in the care of a staff member, the following procedures have been put in place.

## **C MetroWest YMCA Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

The MetroWest YMCA advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. The Y will not tolerate the following disciplinary techniques at any time: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding food or restroom privileges, confining children in small, locked rooms or verbal or emotional abuse. Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, Y staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). The Y encourages appropriate touch; however, at the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children.

If there is an accusation of child abuse, the Y will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. At the first report or possible (probable) cause to believe that child abuse has occurred, the employed staff person it has been reported to will notify the Director, who will then review the incident with the Y President, or their designee. However, if the program director is not immediately available, the staff person should report to the senior staff member. This review by the supervisor cannot in any way deter the reporting of child abuse by the mandated reporter. Most states mandate each staff member or early education and care provider to report information they have learned in their professional role regarding suspected child abuse. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse/neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone, unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm. In most states, mandated reporters are granted immunity from prosecution.
2. The Y will make a report in accordance with relevant state or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved. The person receiving the initial report will be responsible for confirming the facts reported and the condition of the child on the day of the first report.
3. After the information is secured and documented, the President or their designee will then determine if the Department of Children and Families (DCF) needs to be notified. If so, they will call DCF at (508) 872-8122 (8:00am to 4:00pm) or (800) 792-5200 (after business hours) and file a 51A report. Within 48 hours a formal 51A will be filed with the Department of Children and Families. If any of the individuals involved are enrolled in a licensed program, the appropriate licensing agency will be notified immediately that a 51A was filed.

4. In the event the reported incident(s) involve a program volunteer or employed staff, the President or designee will use their discretion to either suspend the volunteer or staff person from the Y or give them administrative tasks away from children if available and appropriate.
5. If appropriate, the parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions of the relevant state or local agency.
6. Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off Y premises, it will be considered job related because of the youth-involved nature of the Y.
7. Reinstatement of the program volunteer or employed staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared by DCF to the satisfaction of the persons named in #1 above and EEC, if relevant. At the time of reinstatement, the staff person will receive back pay.
8. All Y staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information, and therefore, should only discuss the incident with the people directly involved.

# Section Two – School’s Out & EEC Licensed Camps

## I Overview of School’s Out

### A Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives

The central focus of School’s Out is to foster growth and development, not only among the children involved in the program but also among their family members. Components of this goal include building intermediary youth outcomes such as problem-solving and communication skills to support positive development, academic and life success, learning by discovery, individual and group activities, variety, and exploration.

School’s Out helps foster the development of the child’s individual potential by incorporating children in the curriculum planning and implementation process while providing quality experiential education in a safe and nurturing environment. Staff members foster each child’s growth through the offering of age-appropriate activities that include social, physical, creative, and emotional challenges.

Children develop in many different ways and at many different rates. We are committed to being sensitive to each child’s growth and development. We are also sensitive to those children who are developing with disabilities. The MetroWest YMCA staff members work to establish an atmosphere that enables all children to explore and grow.

We designed School’s Out to provide recreational, social, and educational activities that stimulate children’s growth and development for the children enrolled. We made a special effort to develop a program that is developmentally appropriate to meet the individual needs of each child. School’s Out provides a variety of positive, healthy, and interesting activities that promote a child’s physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being. Our programs help children develop to their fullest potential while focusing on the Y character values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility as well as 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills linked by research to academic success and a healthy lifestyle:

- Behavior
- Initiative
- Engagement in Learning
- Analysis and Problem Solving
- Communication Skills
- Homework
- Relations with Adults
- Relations with Peers

### B Statement of Purpose

The MetroWest YMCA School’s Out is an experiential learning model where staff members invest in the whole child, fostering positive growth and healthy development, while balancing the mind, body, and spirit. When we establish a common philosophy and partner with children, families, and schools we can work cooperatively to improve academic success, establish a culture of belonging, and strengthen our community.

Each day, children participate in project-based learning activities linked to academic standards and engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity. They also receive individualized homework support and a healthy snack with a fruit or vegetable. The curriculum includes opportunities to enhance social and emotional skills as well as interactions that build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as leadership, problem solving, engagement in learning, and initiative by means of small and large group activities and service learning projects.

## **C Non-Discrimination Policy**

School's Out admits children of any race and ethnicity to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all children and families at the Y. The Y does not discriminate based on gender, race, religion, parents' marital status, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, physical or mental disability, toilet training status, sexual orientation, or ability to pay.

To ensure that all children and families are welcome and comfortable in our programs, we do not observe holidays and cultural celebrations in our programs. We encourage children to discuss special events and meaningful parts of their lives while they are at the Y, but the staff do not design any activities or introduce concepts that are not inclusive and relevant to all the children. It is our intention that no child or family should ever feel excluded or devalued.

## **II Our Staff Members**

### **A Overview**

We believe the success of our programs, which ultimately rests in the experience of the children, lies in the quality of our staff. Our staff members are carefully selected based on their experience, education, talents, and interpersonal skills. They receive an in-depth orientation training to cover such areas as program goals, emergency procedures, group work, curriculum planning, philosophy of education, goals and objectives, and policy procedures. Our staff members have a multitude of experiences and backgrounds. They also must successfully pass the EEC Background Record Check that includes a CORI (criminal history), SORI (sexual Offender Records Information) and Department of Children and Families child abuse and neglect review. In addition, all employees in the Education Branch are considered conditional hires until their fingerprinting results are approved. Staff members also receive training in first aid, CPR, and child abuse and neglect prevention.

### **B Staff Member and Volunteer Qualifications**

The Y provides its staff with many opportunities for development and advancement through professional development. Program leaders inform their team members of trainings available including conferences, workshops, college courses, and other opportunities. Staff members are required to complete at least twenty hours of training per year.

The School's Out leaders also contact professionals to come to our Y to train staff members on topics such as child abuse, behavioral problems, children with disabilities, positive guidance, and other pertinent issues.

The Y encourages volunteers to work at a School's Out site as specialists or assistant group leaders or similar roles. These volunteers receive appropriate orientation, training, supervision, and staff development. They are chosen for their ability to meet the needs of the children. They must meet the same requirements as the staff regarding Background Record Checks (BRC)'s, references, and an orientation to the program. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in trainings that are offered to the

paid staff members. Although volunteers must track the dates and times of their service, they are not left alone with children and must always be under the direct visual supervision of an EEC qualified educator unless they meet EEC certification requirements.

For a volunteer who is an immediate family member of a child enrolled in School's Out, the Background Record Check and reference check is not applicable if this family member is not included in the required staff to child ratio.

The Y will describe, in writing, any arrangements they may have with any school or professional training program that will include an overview of child responsibilities as well as an explanation of the supervision of children by the training program and the Y.

### **III Enrollment Procedures and Requirements**

#### **A Registration and Enrollment Criteria**

For children in kindergarten through sixth grade, we offer fall registration for School's Out to current Y participant families before it is opened to the general community. If a large number of families from the community have expressed interest in enrolling at a site, the Y may conduct a lottery for enrollment before establishing a waitlist. Registration takes place online and our enrollment capacity is determined by our EEC license.

The Y uses DocNetwork, a secure online platform, to maintain the required enrollment and participation documents. Using the email notification families receive from DocNetwork, families must complete or update their children's profiles before children can participate in the program. Enrollment documents include pick-up authorization information, emergency information and consent, and acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of Family Handbook and Health Care Policies with Emergency Procedures to verify that families understand and adhere to the policies and procedures set forth by the MetroWest YMCA. Please note that families must update all medical information, authorizations, and emergency contact information annually.

Enrollment and registration materials are confidential, but available immediately to:

- The program administrators and staff members in the child's group
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities, on request.

No children can participate in School's Out, including summer camp and vacation day programming, if the family has a balance with the MetroWest YMCA.

#### **B Registration Changes**

Families must share registration changes such as changes in pick-up authorizations, contact information, and health information in a timely manner with the Site Director and Director of Family Services. We require a minimum of one week notice to add day(s) to children's schedules. To withdraw your child from the program or drop day(s) from your child's schedule, we require 30 days written notice. Changes will only be accommodated if space allows.

## **C School's Out Financial Information**

New children interested in enrolling in School's Out pay a one-time initial enrollment fee in addition to the \$30 annual registration fee charged to all children. For state-subsidized participants (contracted slots or vouchers), there is no enrollment or registration fee required. Please note that families receiving Y-Assist are still required to pay the fees.

Upon enrollment, families on EEC financial aid must provide a deposit equal to the assessed tuition for five standard days of care. Regular tuition payments are due no later than the Monday the week before care is provided.

For all other families, we required pre-payment equal to one week's tuition at the time of registration to reserve your child's space in the program. We apply that payment to your child's first week of tuition. Families must pay tuition on or before the Monday two weeks before the week of care unless the family and the Y have made alternative arrangements. We charge families a late fee of \$15 when payments are one week late. Tuition that is two weeks overdue may result in termination of care and prohibit access to other Y programs if we do not have a payment plan established. The MetroWest YMCA sends unpaid tuition fees to a collection agency.

We do not charge tuition for School's Out for the weeks of December, February, and April vacations. Families are responsible for payment when their child does not attend School's Out on their scheduled day or when they use extra days. Please note that we charge vacation and snow day programming separately.

## **D Financial Assistance**

The tuition is based on covering the operating costs of the program. Our Annual Campaign helps to keep tuition reasonable while allowing us to provide quality programming. Through "Y-Assist," we offer financial assistance through reduced rates to those who cannot afford the full price of membership, program activity or School's Out tuition. Eligibility is based on income level, family size and funds available. We require that all families who receive Y-Assist explore other tuition subsidies, such as the [Department of Early Education and Care subsidy program](#), so that we can help as many families as possible. As a result, we also accept voucher payments through local resource and referral agencies and have limited contracted slot spaces for income eligible participants.

Ask the Director of Family Services or the Executive Director of Education for more details.

## **E Withdrawal Policy**

Families must inform MetroWest YMCA School's Out in writing one month in advance if they are withdrawing their child from the program. Families who fail to do so will still be liable for payment for one month after notification. The Y reserves the right to terminate services with a two-week advance notice to families. When the health, welfare, and safety of the child (i.e., a child running away from the group) or other children are at stake, the Y reserves the right to suspend or terminate services immediately.

## **F Program Plan**

Every day, the Y presents enrichment activities that build on the learning completed during the school day through an experiential, project-based approach. The hands-on activities provide opportunities for exploration and learning in academic subjects such as STEM and ELA as well as 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill support, service learning, and leadership development. Daily enrichment projects are designed to incorporate a variety of different types of learning opportunities where children can build skills, practice concepts, and

strengthen areas of weakness in areas of interest. Children are engaged and motivated to participate since we present these academic activities as sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE).

The daily activities provide a mixture of opportunities that build on the learning from the school day where children have the opportunity to explore ideas and practice concepts. Children participate in STEAM and literacy enrichment with broad-based conceptual /cognitive learning that includes instructional content that goes beyond homework, tutoring, and rote skill practice. Healthy snacks based on standards developed by YUSA, Harvard University, and the National Institute of Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and moderate to vigorous physical activities for at least 30 minutes help keep young bodies healthy and improve their ability to focus and build strong minds.

At least once per week, we balance arts education, through both visual or performing arts, with exposure to a variety of arts activities and projects that move children toward mastery in a particular art area. Global learning engages children in cultural exploration that allows them to investigate the world, recognize perspective, communicate ideas, and take action. We incorporate twenty-first century skill development into project based learning that aligns with school day curriculum; building skills such as teamwork, time management, and conflict resolution, and relating to 21<sup>st</sup> Century content such as STEM. We integrate leadership development into youth leadership programs and project based activities.

Nutrition and wellness education teaches children the basics of a healthy lifestyle that they can use for the rest of their lives, while we offer college and career exploration at least twice per month to expose children to different career paths as well as higher education opportunities.

The children plan, implement, document, and debrief service learning projects with clear learning objectives that help strengthen our community and/or the world at large at least one project per quarter.

Please note that we limit screen time to computer based educational activities of no more than 30 minutes per day.

## **G Toothbrushing**

With concerns about the increase in tooth decay (cavities) among children, School's Out includes the promotion of positive oral health and prevention of tooth decay in the curriculum. Staff members assist interested children with brushing their teeth when they are in care for more than four (4) hours or have a meal in our care. We implement this program safely by following the regulations for infection control set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is free to the families. Children will brush with the direct supervision of our staff members. When needed, the Y provides new toothbrushes for each child after three months of use, or after they are sick.

## **H Program Evaluation**

To ensure that School's Out sites are operating at the highest level of quality possible, the MetroWest YMCA has adopted the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs Afterschool Framework and associated Roadmap to Quality. The framework consists of Belief Statements and Program Components. The Belief Statements portion of the framework are consistent values that are embedded within a Y quality afterschool program. The Program Components part of the framework provides programs with a continuum of quality relating to academic support, quality enrichment, health and wellness, and healthy eating. The framework's assessment builds off the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS) created by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). To support this work, the Y also uses

NIOST’s Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO) to collect data on program participants from after school educators. These pre- and post-surveys provide information that helps the Y educators tailor our programs to best support the growth of children in eight outcome areas:

- Initiative
- Engagement in Learning
- Behavior
- Analysis and Problem Solving
- Communication Skills
- Homework
- Relations with Adults
- Relations with Peers

We also use family questionnaires, child surveys, and input from school personnel to guide program improvement and strategic planning.

### I Holidays

School’s Out may not be open on the following days. Please note that alternative programming may be available through the Y for an additional fee.

Professional Development (two days) .....	late August/early September
Labor Day .....	September
Columbus Day.....	October
Veteran’s Day .....	November
Thanksgiving Day.....	November
Day after Thanksgiving Day .....	November
Christmas Eve (close at 1:30) .....	December
Christmas Day .....	December
New Year’s Eve (close at 1:30) .....	December
New Year’s Day.....	January
Martin Luther King Jr. Day .....	January
President’s Day.....	February
Patriot’s Day .....	April
Memorial Day.....	May
Juneteenth.....	June
Independence Day.....	July

### J Inclement Weather Policy

In the case of inclement weather, School’s Out leadership will send out an email to all the families as well as a message via *TalkingPoints*, a multilingual texting and communication app. We also share the Information on our Facebook page. Please call for a voice mail message (508) 879-4420 or (508) 934-9345 for cancellation or delayed opening changes. If poor weather develops during the day, we may ask families to pick up their children early. The MetroWest YMCA also reserves the right to close early or consolidate programs and/or groups due to low attendance.

### K Vacation Days

Participants in School’s Out may choose to participate in vacation care programming on days when school is not open. We share information that details registration, field trip information, and an activity schedule shortly before each vacation period. Families provide lunches, snacks, and required medications unless otherwise noted.



Families can register and pay for each day individually. Those who receive EEC vouchers or contracted slots for financial aid must pay the full day rate when school is not in session regardless of whether the Y offers programming or if their child attends. All families must register online for vacation days for their child to participate in a vacation day program.

## **L School's Out Transportation**

The Y will only provide transportation to and/or from schools or other sites where a minimum of three children need transportation. If your child misses the Y transportation vehicle, they should return to the school's main office and call the Y. A vehicle will return to the school and pick up your child as soon as possible. The Y is on a tight transportation schedule and advises families to remind their children to be on time for daily pick-up. Please note that the Y is not responsible for providing transportation for children scheduled to use a public school bus. Staff members will investigate any child missing from the scheduled transportation list. Going into the schools to search for missing children takes time and impacts heavily on the program.

School's Out participants are transported to/from school to the program site by MetroWest YMCA bus or van, transportation provided by the school system, staff escort by foot, and families who drive their children. The schools are responsible for the children until the Y vehicle arrives at the school, the public school bus arrives at the site, or the child arrives at the program. Families are responsible for their child if they walk or the family transports the child from school to the School's Out site.

To keep children as safe as possible, we encourage families to make sure that the child restraint system that is used for transporting children is installed correctly, designed for children of the same age and/or size, and in compliance with current Massachusetts law.

## **IV Family Rights and Responsibilities**

### **A Family Rights**

Chapter 28, Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of "day care centers" (including Nursery schools).

Section 7.04 of 102 CMR 7.00 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations requires the MetroWest YMCA to inform all families of their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission of their child to the program. The regulations that govern early education and care programs contain more information.

### **B Family Input and Volunteer Opportunities**

The MetroWest YMCA encourages families to share their input in the development of program policy and procedures. They can bring their ideas and recommendations to the program staff who work with their children or program leadership. If we are not able to implement their suggestion relating to the program or policy, we will provide an explanation as to why we will not be able to adopt the suggestion.

If families have a concern, we suggest discussing the issue with the program leadership to develop a plan together to work towards a resolution. If family members continue to feel that their concerns are not resolved, we encourage them to reach out to the Out-of-School Time Director, Associate Executive

Director of Education, or the Associate Director of Camping Services, then Executive Director for the program. We will provide a written response when requested.

In addition, we encourage family members to participate and volunteer in the program. We welcome short and long term volunteers, for special activities and events, fundraising, administrative tasks, and more. Please contact the Director if you are interested in volunteering.

### **C Family Visits and Conferences**

We need your help to ensure quality programs. The Y encourages families to visit at any time. Families can also schedule conferences throughout the year. Open and friendly communication is essential.

Please notify the Y if you are going to be away for several days and your child will be in the care of someone else since this sometimes affects your child's behavior. Also, it is important for us to know who is responsible when you are away. Throughout the year, if there is anything unusual going on in your home, please let the director or staff member know so that we can support your child, especially if it impacts their behavior.

Remember, your child may be a bit timid and shy at first, so encourage your child to get involved with the program activities. As you gain feedback throughout the year, keep us informed. We need to have open communication between the program and the home as to how your child feels, what they like and dislike. As your child arrives home each day, discuss the day. Find out what they enjoyed doing that day or with whom they played.

We welcome family participation and input. The children, staff members and leadership appreciate your creativity, ideas, and leadership in activities. We would appreciate hearing from you in writing or email as to what areas your child liked as well as those suggestions you may have. We encourage your feedback and incorporate it throughout the year as well as for future planning. With this feedback, we can continue to grow as some of the best youth programs in Massachusetts.

Family concerns or complaints about our program should be immediately directed to the director. We review all the details surrounding your concern or complaint to determine different solutions and implement an action plan. Feel free to discuss any concerns or suggestions that you may have with the staff members and/or the Director.

### **D Progress Reports**

Each winter, the School's Out staff members complete written progress reports for all children enrolled in the program. We provide a copy of each report to the family or meet with them to discuss their child's growth and participation in the program. Please note that we bring special problems or significant developments to the family's attention as soon as they arise.

### **E Children's Records**

Information contained in a child's record must be privileged and confidential. The MetroWest Y will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's family. The Y will notify the family if a child's record is subpoenaed.

## **1 Access to the Record**

The family must have access to the child's record at reasonable times. In no event must such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. We will make the entire child's record available upon request regardless of the physical location of the file.

When a child's record has been requested, the following information will be documented and recorded in the child's file: the name of the person who disseminated or released information contained in a child's record, in whole or in part; signature, position, the date of each instance of dissemination or release; the portions of the record which were disseminated or released; the purpose of the records which were disseminated or released; the purpose of such dissemination or release; and the signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or released. Such log must be available only to the child's family and Y personnel responsible for record maintenance.

## **2 Charge for Copies**

The MetroWest YMCA does not charge a fee for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

## **3 Amending the Child's Records**

Children's families have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. Families have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request must follow with the procedures described below:

If such family is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, they must have the right to have a conference with the MetroWest YMCA to make their objections known; the MetroWest YMCA must, within one (1) week after the conference, render to such family a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If their decision is in favor of the family, they must immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

## **4 Transfer of Records**

Upon written request of the parent or guardian, the MetroWest YMCA will transfer a copy of the child's record to the parent, or any other person the parent identifies, when the child is no longer in Y care. The program will ask the parent or guardian to sign a form documenting consent for transfer of records and/or verifying that the record was received.

## **F Family Responsibilities**

To maintain a comfortable and safe environment for children, families, and staff, we have the following guidelines that we ask all adults to model the Y Character Values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The following are some examples of how these values can be implemented:

- Use appropriate language while in the program.
- Respect confidentiality by having personal conversations in private.
- Interact with others in a non-threatening and non-aggressive manner.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in termination of care with families still responsible for all fees including tuition for the following 30 days.

## V Responsibilities of EEC Licensed Programs

### A Providing Information to the Department of Early Education and Care

The MetroWest YMCA must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes information in the child's records. Authorized employees of EEC are not to remove identifying case materials from the program premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

### B Reporting Abuse or Neglect

All staff members are mandated reporters and are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Children and Families or to the MetroWest YMCA's program administrator. The MetroWest YMCA must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

### C Notification of Injury

The MetroWest YMCA must notify parents and guardians immediately of any injury that requires emergency care. They must also notify the parent, in writing, within 24 hours, if the Y provides any first aid to the child.

### D Availability of Regulations

The program must have a copy of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask the personnel at the program for a copy.

### E Confidentiality Policy

The MetroWest YMCA respects each family's right to privacy and confidentiality. As a result, information such as incident reports, portfolios, family specific supports including referrals regarding a child, and the child's health and safety file are confidential and will only be shared with the child's parents or legal guardians. Within the program, child specific information is only available to program leadership and the staff members in the group where the child attends. Regulatory authorities such as the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) or the Department of Children and Families (DCF) may also review children's files as part of an agency review or investigation. Written authorization from the parent or guardian is required to share any other component of the child's record. Families who would like additional restrictions on access or who have questions about the policy should contact the program director. In addition, the following EEC regulation Confidentiality and Distribution of Records and Information 7.04(12) provides additional information about our confidentiality practices.

*Information pertaining to children and their families is privileged and confidential. No licensee or educator may distribute or release information about a child or their family to any unauthorized person or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or their family without the written consent of the child's parent. The child's parent, at reasonable times, must, upon request, have access to everything in his or her child's record.*

*(a) The licensee must not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent(s) or pursuant to a court order. The licensee must notify the parent(s) if the child's record is subpoenaed.*

*(b) The child's parent(s) or guardian(s) must, upon request, have access to their child's record at reasonable times. In no event may such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent(s). Upon such request for access, the child's entire record must be made available regardless of the physical location of its parts.*

*(c) Upon written request of the parent(s), the licensee must transfer a copy of the child's records to the parent(s), or any other person the parent(s) identifies within a reasonable amount of time.*

*(d) The licensee must establish procedures governing access to, duplication of, and distribution of such information; and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating each time a child's record has been released or reviewed.*

*1. Each time information is released or distributed from a child's record to someone who is not a program employee the following information must be recorded: the name, signature, and position of the person releasing or distributing the information; the date; the portions of the record which were distributed or released; the purpose of such distribution or release; and the signature of the person to whom the information is distributed or released.*

*2. Such log must be available only to the child's parent(s), to program personnel responsible for record maintenance, and to the EEC as part of its regulatory function.*

## **F Research, Experimentation, and Unusual Treatment Policy**

The MetroWest YMCA will not conduct or allow any research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without the written, informed, consent of the affected child's parents or guardians, for each occurrence. In programs where observations of children (by other than families of the children in the program) are common, a general written parental consent may be used. Observations mean that there is no interaction between the child and the observers and no identification of the individual child. The MetroWest YMCA will not allow research, experimentation, or unusual treatment to take place in the programs that might harm a child. Research and experimentation shall not mean program evaluation or data collection for purposes of documenting services of the program which do not identify individual children.

## **G Unauthorized Activities Policy**

The MetroWest YMCA will not allow children to participate in any activities unrelated to the direct care of children without the written, informed consent of the parent(s) or guardian. "Activities" shall mean, but not be limited to: fund raising and publicity, including photographs and participation in the mass media.

## Appendix: MetroWest Y staff, Lines of Authority & Supervision

