

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian,

Welcome to the Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Child Care Program. We are delighted you have chosen our program for your child(ren). We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing experience for your child with plenty of opportunities for growth in spirit, mind, and body. All the programs and activities are value based focusing on character development through caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The Child Care staff are caring individuals who are committed to providing a safe and enjoyable place for your child to spend the morning and/or afternoon.

This handbook is designed to assist you in better understanding the policies and procedures of our programs. Hopefully, it will answer any questions you may have. Please take the time to review this handbook with your child, and keep it on record for future reference. Parents are encouraged to visit our program at anytime. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to us. We are very interested in your comments, suggestions, questions, and feedback regarding our program.

Thank you for choosing the Cheshire Community YMCA to meet your child care needs. The Cheshire Community YMCA staff and volunteers are glad to have you as part of the YMCA family.

The Cheshire Community YMCA would like to acknowledge and thank the Cheshire Board of Education and Principals for their cooperation and support to the YMCA.

Sincerely,

The Cheshire Community YMCA  
Staff and Volunteers

## **Purpose and Goals of the YMCA**

The YMCA's mission, since its founding in 1844, is to develop and clarify human values for living based on Judeo-Christian principles. This is accomplished by designing programs that offer youth and families the opportunity to:

- ☺ Adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles;
- ☺ Strengthen the quality of relationships among themselves and others;
- ☺ Develop in themselves leadership qualities, self-confidence and self esteem and;
- ☺ Be informed of international issues and YMCA efforts around the world.

YMCA membership is open to all without regard for race, sex, color, nationality or religion.

## **Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Child Care Program**

The purpose of the Cheshire Community YMCA School Age program is to provide a quality before and after school care program to children in grades one through six, who reside in Cheshire.

The program meets or exceeds all guidelines set forth by the Connecticut Department of Public Health and is fully licensed by the State of Connecticut.

## **Goals For the Program**

1. To work in partnership with parents, school personnel, and the community to support a child's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth.
2. To provide a safe, supervised and structured environment in which children may choose from a variety of activities.
3. To encourage the development of social skills of each child through shared activities with other children.
4. To reinforce the positive values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility and help children build personal character.
5. To develop the child's sense of self-worth by involving them in the planning of the program and independence through allowing them to make decisions for themselves.

## **Goals For the Children**

1. To feel safe, comfortable, and respected as an individual.
2. To develop a positive sense of self and a foundation for a healthy life style.
3. To acquire the skills of conflict resolution, positive communication, and a respect for individual differences.
4. To feel comfortable with one's self, one's accomplishments, and one's abilities.
5. To develop self help skills, independence, and a sense of responsibility for one's actions and behavior.

## **Staff Philosophy**

One of the most critical components to accomplishing our mission and successfully implementing our philosophy is maintaining the highest quality staff possible and providing them with the resources and support to be successful. At the YMCA we understand how crucial the after school hours are. Our staff is made up of dedicated and caring professionals who welcome the opportunity and challenge taking care of your children. We are confident that we will provide your child with superior nurturing and guidance while they are under our care. In addition to some of the staff having a formal education, all of our staff have a genuine love for young children and a commitment to high quality care. All of our staff participate in continuing education and are certified in first aid and CPR. Our staff are always available to meet with parents regarding questions and concerns. Please arrange a mutually convenient time with your child's Site Coordinator.

## **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 staff at your child's site or the Site Coordinator. If you feel the problem has not been resolved, please contact the School Age Director or Childcare Director. If it still has not been resolved, please contact the Branch Director.

## **Program Activities**

The School Age Child Care program offers a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of the children in the program.

*Creative Arts* are activities that include the fine arts, craft projects, art history, or any visual creative expression (excluding dramatic arts).

*Dramatic Arts* include but are not limited to music, dance, theatre arts, and creative movement.

*Active Games* are any sports or active play taking place in the gym or outside. A variety of non-competitive games will be offered during the month. Non-Competitive games help to avoid aggressive play, feelings of failure, and children being excluded. It is important to offer games that are age appropriate; it is possible to offer games for a specific age group or to the group as a whole.

*Enrichment Activities* are learning activities, which allow children the opportunity to investigate, create, and enrich their knowledge base with fun experiences. These activities can include reading, mathematics, and science activities.

*Homework Time* is designated everyday, with a staff person assigned specifically to this activity and available to children who need help with their homework.

*Clubs* reflect the interests of the children, and are run a few times a year. Some clubs that have been of interest in the past are Dinosaur Club, Basketball Club, Cooking Club, Science Club, Drawing Club.

*Community Service Activities* are excellent long-term activities which get your child(ren) involved in the local community. Past activities have included: Bake Sale to raise money for Christmas gifts for less fortunate children, Can Drives to raise money for the shelters in the area, making wreaths for people living in a convalescent home, etc..

## **Character Development**

Character Development is a National YMCA Program promoting Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. These character traits should be present in activities, room decorations, and group meetings. In projects the color associations can be used: Caring-Red, Honesty-Blue, Respect-Yellow, and Responsibility-Green.

## **Location of Programs**

### **Cheshire Community YMCA**

Programs: Kinder Pals.

### **Doolittle Elementary School**

Program: Doolittle After School Age Child Care

### **Highland Elementary School**

Program: Highland Before and After School Age Child Care

### **Norton Elementary School**

Program: Norton Before and After School Age Child Care

### **Chapman Elementary School**

Program: Chapman After School Age Child Care

## **Program Hours**

Morning Care is available from 7:00 a.m. until the start of school each morning. Morning Care is only available to those children who attend Norton or Highland School.

Afternoon Care is available from the time of school dismissal until 6:00 p.m. each afternoon and is available at all of the schools.

The kinderpals program is available during the time of day your child is not in school. The program opens at 7:00am-6:00pm.

## **Notification of School Personnel**

It is the Parent/Guardian responsibility to notify the school office and the child's teacher that the child will be attending the YMCA after care program. Please also notify school personnel of any changes to your child's before or after care schedule.

## Days of Operation

The Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Child Care programs will be available from the first day of school through the last day of school, based on the public school calendar. The before and after school program and kinderpals programs do not operate on days off from school. On those days children may enroll separately in the Fun Day program.

## Voice Mail and Site Numbers

The YMCA goal is to have easy and accurate information to and from parents. If you need to leave a message for the site your child is attending to please call the Cheshire Community YMCA and leave a message on the Voice Mail System. Messages are checked by the sites at the start of each program. If there is an emergency you can contact the site directly during program hours. If you are unable to reach anyone at the site call the Cheshire Community YMCA and a staff will be sent out with the message. If you have any questions about the Voice Mail System please contact the Childcare Director at the Cheshire Community YMCA.

To leave a message for the sites:

1. Call the Cheshire Community YMCA Main Number (203) 272-3150

### 2. Site Voice Mails                      Site Numbers

a. Highland	#402	272-3623 or 272-4142
b. Chapman	#400	271-1982
c. Norton	#403	271-1595
d. Doolittle	#401	271-2558

## School Vacation Days/Fun Days

During school vacations the Cheshire YMCA will be running “Fun Days” for Kindergarten – 7<sup>th</sup> grade for an additional fee. The Fun Day program will run from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Special activities are planned and could include field trips, theme days and lots more.

We understand that many of our YMCA families have rotating work schedules and varied financial situations. Our goal is to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to enroll in the Fun Day program. Registration for the next month’s Fun Days will begin on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the actual Fun Days. For example, registration for any November Fun Days will begin on October 15. Registration will continue until the program is full or up to one business day prior to trip. *No registrations will be accepted on the day of the Fun Day.* Your first registration must be made in person to assure that the proper paperwork is filled out completely.

**\*Note: A late fee will be charged to those children who are picked up later than 6:00 p.m. (See Late Fee policy.)**

## **Scheduled Early Dismissal Days**

School Age Child Care will be held from the time of dismissal on all scheduled half days of school to 6:00 p.m.

## **Delayed Openings**

Norton Before Care and Highland Before Care will open at 7:00 a.m. on delayed opening days.

## **Early School Closings due to Inclement Weather**

If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, After Care will **NOT** be available. On these days parents should make arrangements for their child prior to the beginning of the school day. The child should be aware of these plans as well as the school they attend. It is the responsibility of the parents to find out if the Cheshire Public Schools are dismissing early, the YMCA will not notify you. Remember, YMCA staff will not be at the After School sites.

Please fill out the Early School Closing form in the appendix of this hand book so that we will have clear instructions for school personal as to your plans for early dismissal.

## **Closings**

The Cheshire YMCA will not operate on the following days: Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. You will be notified if there is any change in the schedule.

## **Snow Days**

The Cheshire Community YMCA will provide a "Snow Day" program on days when schools are closed due to inclement weather. The program runs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Registration for this program is on a first come, first serve basis. See Appendix B for a Snow Day registration form. Your first registration must be made in person to assure that the proper paperwork is filled out completely

## **Emergency Closing**

There may be times during the year when it will be necessary to close our School Age Child Care program (severe weather, power failure, etc.). In such an event:

- ☺ Parents will be contacted, and are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible.
- ☺ If the parents cannot make it, the parents should call someone who is authorized to pick up the child.
- ☺ If the YMCA cannot reach the parents, they will attempt to reach someone on the authorized pick-up list.

## **Summer Vacation**

During the summer vacation, the Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Child Care program is not held. Parents are encouraged to register their children for an exciting camping experience at YMCA Camp Quinnipiac and/or YMCA Camp Sloper. Details

are available in the spring at the front desk of the YMCA. Before and After Camp care is also available through the Cheshire Community YMCA.

## **Health Regulations and Records**

All children entering the School Age Child Care Program must be able to use the bathroom independently. 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. Medical forms need to be updated in kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This is a State of Connecticut licensing requirement.

The School Age Program is required to keep accurate records for each child in our program. Please report changes in information (address, home, business or emergency phone #, etc.) to your Site Coordinator or the School Age Director.

## **Communicable Diseases**

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

Temperature of 101 or higher, greenish discharge from the nose, a chronic, deep or hacking cough, stomach ache, ear infection, 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 after 12 noon, he/she will remain at home the full next day to assure 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.

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. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact form once a parent is reached. 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.

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

A child who has vomited must be kept home for 24 hours after their last episode.

A child with an ear infection may return once they are on medication for the infection, have a normal temperature and are experiencing no pain or discomfort or with approval from your doctor.

A child will be allowed to return to school if she/he has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours and/or is fever free. Fever free means no Tylenol or any other antipyretic (fever reducer) for 4-6 hours prior to checking in.

A child with greenish discharge from the nose, a chronic, deep or hacking cough, a sore throat, or rash may return to the program when symptoms are gone or with a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious.

A child with head lice may return to the once they have been treated with medicated shampoo and all the nits are removed.

If a child is well enough to attend child care, he/she is well enough to participate in all activities at the YMCA including outdoor play and gym time.

If your child is absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Director. 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 you 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.

## **Injury**

If a child is injured during the program hours a staff person certified in first aid will treat the child if the injury is minor. If the injury is more serious and emergency medical care is needed, parents will be contacted immediately. In the event that a parent can not be reached, the YMCA will take necessary steps to obtain an ambulance. Emergency personnel will determine which emergency treatment center to transport the child to.

Should your child be injured during the course of the day, an accident 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. A teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pickup time.

## **Administration of Medication**

1. Before medication (prescription and non-prescription) is administered, the Cheshire YMCA must have the following:

- \*Authorization for the Administration of Medication form must be filled out completely. One is available in the Appendix.
- \*Medication must be in a safety cap container.
- \*The original prescription label must be on the container.
- \*The name of the child must be on the container.
- \*The date of the prescription will be within one month for antibiotics and within the expiration date for medications which are so labeled.

2. Parent should give medication directly to YMCA staff member and not to child for delivery.
3. No medication will be administered until all the above have been given to the YMCA.

### **Payment Policies**

School Age Child Care payments are due on a monthly basis. Tuition is based on 180 days of school and is broken down into 10 equal payments. The fee is consistent regardless of the number of school days in the month.

Payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before care is provided (example: December's payment is due by November 15<sup>th</sup>). Child care payments must be made on time to assure that your child can continue in the program. Please save your receipts for tax purposes. . Please contact Karen Thuerk, Program and Membership Registrar at (203) 272-3150 with questions regarding payments.

Our tax id number is 06-0646905

### **Making Payments**

The Cheshire Community YMCA is able to accept credit card payments for child care (Visa, MasterCard). To make it even easier, we are able to automatically charge your child care fees to the card of your choice each month. If you pay by check, please write your child's first, last name and school they attend in the memo section. Please make timely payments in order to avoid any late penalties.

All payments are to be made at the front desk of the YMCA. Please do not give payments to child care staff.

### **Fees Will Be Charged Regardless of Attendance**

There is no partial payment if a child is out sick. The only exception would be if a child were away from the program due to a prolonged illness. In such a case, the School Age Director or the Program and Membership Registrar needs to be notified at the beginning of the absence not upon returning to the program. No credit will be given for past time missed.

### **Membership Fees**

Children enrolled in the School Age Child Care program must have a Cheshire YMCA Membership, which is renewable on a yearly basis. This membership allows the child to register for many of the great programs offered here at the YMCA.

### **Late Pick Up Fees**

It is important that you pick up your child by 6:00 p.m., as we schedule our staff around these times. Children enrolled in the School Age Child Care programs are expected to be picked up by 6:00 pm each day. A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed for the first 5 minutes, then an additional \$1.00 for each minute there after, example: 4 minutes late is a \$5.00 charge, 10 minutes late is a \$10.00 charge, and so on. 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.

After three late pickups the rate will increase to \$2.00 per minute and you may be in danger of being dismissed from our program.

### **Arrival and Departure**

In compliance with State regulations, and for the safety of your child, we require that parents bring their child into the site each morning and sign him/her in. In the afternoon, parents need to come into the site and sign out their child. Please be sure to check for any notices or memos that might be posted for your information.

Morning School Age Child Care begins at 7:00 am, please do not leave your child unattended before then. Also, please be sure to pick up your child by 6:00 p.m. If, for any reason, you feel you may be late, please try to make arrangements to have an authorized individual pick up your child. Then call the School Age site staff to tell them your situation.

### **Authorized Pickup**

Children will only be released to those individuals who are listed on the authorized pick-up list in the child's file. Anyone who is picking up for the first time or someone who the staff does not recognize will be asked to show photo identification. This is done for the safety and security of each child in our program; so please make sure whoever comes to pick up your child brings a photo-ID with them.

If the person picking your child up is not on the pick up list, you must send in written permission authorizing this person to pick up your child. Please include that person's address and phone number where they may be reached. Again, staff will need to see a photo-ID. YMCA staff will not release your child to someone they do not recognize without a photo ID and written permission from the parent.

### **Child Not Picked Up**

If a child has not been picked up by 6:15 p.m. the staff will attempt to contact the parents. If staff are unable to reach the parents and the child is not picked up by 6:30 p.m., staff will call the emergency contacts. If staff are unable to reach anyone and the child has not been picked up by 6:30 p.m. we have no choice but to contact the Cheshire Police Department and request their assistance in locating you. (This is one of the reasons why it is crucial that work phone numbers and emergency numbers be kept up to date.)

### **Absences**

If your child is going to be absent from any School Age Child Care Program please notify the YMCA at (203) 272-3150 and leave a message on the Site's Voice Mail. The staff accounts for each child every day, it is much appreciated if you let us know that your child was not at school that day.

### **Mandated Reporters**

All YMCA staff members are required by law to report any suspicions 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, two staff members will transport the child to Bradley Hospital in their vehicle. If the injuries are warranted, an ambulance may be called. The child will be accompanied by two staff people.

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 chose 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 of our Child Care staff within six months of employment and once a year after that.

## **Snacks**

A nutritious snack will be provided each afternoon for all children who are enrolled in the After School Child Care program. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the staff of any dietary restrictions or food allergies your child may have. In severe cases it may become necessary for the parents to provide their child with a snack. 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.

## **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, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) the YMCA must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

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.

### **Clothing**

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable to the season and activities of the School Age Child Care program. Please feel free to send a change of clothes with your child if deemed necessary. Please be sure to dress your child appropriately during the winter months so they may participate in outdoor play. All children's clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

### **Withdrawal from Program**

At least two weeks notification must be given to the School Age Child Care Director prior to the withdrawal of a child from the School Age Child Care program. This notification must be in writing. You will be responsible for fees until the last day of your child's attendance.

### **Inclusion/Special Needs**

The YMCA does not discriminate against any child on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status of the parent, or because of a need for special care. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of each child within the structure of our program while maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff.

The YMCA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable Federal, State or local law in providing services to children with special needs or disabilities. Each child brings his or her own uniqueness to the program. We will consider the application of any child.

Children with special needs will be considered for admission to the program on a case by case basis. If your child will require special services or additional accommodations are requested, please contact the appropriate program's Director so that we may set up a plan to best serve your child's needs.

A YMCA Director will meet with parents/guardians before enrollment to assess the child's individual care needs. The YMCA has the obligation to ensure the physical and emotional safety of each of the children entrusted to our care. It is essential that all information about the child's needs be available to staff from the beginning of the enrollment process, so that a continuing bond of trust and mutual partnership exists for the benefit of the child. Upon enrollment, a written care plan will be developed between the parent and the program (and possibly with outside specialists), on specifics relating to

the care of the child. Staff and parents will continue to meet regularly to monitor the child's progress.

It is sometimes necessary to redirect children with special needs, especially if we do not have the facilities or staff to help that child. Children who pose an actual direct risk of harm to others or who cannot be accommodated safely will not be admitted/continued in the program.

Minimal monitoring and extra supervision is reasonable as long as it is not fundamentally different from the responsibilities that all child care staff have for safety and well-being of their program participants. The YMCA is unable to provide one-to-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

If it is unclear whether the YMCA can reasonably accommodate the unique needs of a child, we will arrive at a final decision by reviewing the circumstances on a case-by-case basis. A review will be comprised of: 1) the Director meeting with the child and family to observe the child in the child care setting. 2) The Director assessing the staff person's ability to properly care for the child. This may include whether additional staff training, at a cost that is not unreasonable to the YMCA would mitigate the difficulty. 3) The Director observing the child's adaptation to the group of children and discuss the child's needs with the program's staff.

A discussion of possible, necessary accommodations will be undertaken and accommodations that are reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program will be offered and implemented. If a proposed accommodation is prohibitively costly or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, the parents will be informed without delay.

A two week trial period may be utilized to help make a final determination of our ability to provide child care services.

The YMCA does not offer diaper-changing services as part of our child care service. 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 in order to perform this service.

In licensed child care program a staff member certified to administer medications will be on site at all times. This staff member will administer medications to children who have asthma, who experience allergic reactions, or require blood-glucose tests. The YMCA will not administer insulin shots, or shots of any other kind. Any other substitute foods for raising blood sugar, such as honey, or orange juice, or other food substance, will be maintained at the parents' request if we are reasonably able to do so. Parents of children with any potentially life-threatening illness or condition must provide the YMCA of an emergency contact that is available while the child is in our care. The parents or other

professionals designated by parents must train staff in the proper administration of medications and complete all required paperwork.

Guidelines for behavior are just that – guidelines, and not rigid rules. If staff believes that a situation exists that poses 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.

If it is determined that a child whose needs cannot be met in our child care program through reasonable accommodations, but could potentially be met successfully with an accommodation such as an additional caretaker not funded by the YMCA, an agreement with the YMCA must be in place prior to enrollment.

The agreement will provide that the caretaker: 1) is at least 18 years of age, 2) has been fingerprinted and cleared of criminal records, 3) is free from tuberculosis and is determined fit to care for children by a physician 4) meets all applicable state standards for the type of services 5) is not an employee or independent contractor of the YMCA 6) will be subject to the overall supervision of the YMCA while he or she is present at the program.

### **Positive Discipline and Behavior Management**

The Cheshire Community YMCA School Age Program promotes the belief that discipline is a method of providing children with the structure, support, encouragement, and problem-solving skills they need to make responsible decisions. Positive discipline is teaching children how to be productive members of society. In the YMCA School Age Program staff are trained to use redirection, problem solving, and logical and natural consequences to help children learn to make better choices and behave responsibly. Children are held to high standards of behavior and staff members are expected to be consistent and firm in their approach to behavior concerns.

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.

### **Cheshire Community YMCA Discipline Standards**

1. Children will be treated with respect and dignity.
2. Children will assist staff in writing 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.

## **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.
  - The agreement will address what steps staff have already done to help the child with their negative behavior including behavior charts, incentive program, or special privileges.
  - The agreement will also outline which behaviors will not be tolerated and consequences for continuing them. Suspension from the program will be determined by School Age Director.

*When possible parents will be provided with two weeks notice to find 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.*

## **Thirty Day Probationary Period**

Children enrolled in the School Age Child Care program begin with a 30-day probationary period. During this time staff will observe the child's behavior, emotional needs, and his/her ability to adapt in a healthy manner to the structure of the program. If during this period staff determine that the program cannot meet the needs of the child, parents will be required to take the child out of the program.

## **Dismissal of a Child**

Parents will be required to remove a child from the School Age Child Care program if:

- ☺ The child is a danger to him/her self, to the other children in the program, or to the staff.
- ☺ The parents refuse to follow the School Age Child Care policies as described in this handbook.
- ☺ The child can not 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 a special request for the care of a child is made that:
  1. Can not be met with the available resources
  2. Is not consistent with the policies or program philosophy of the YMCA.

## **Payment for Damages**

Parents will be held responsible for payment of replacement or repairs to property that has been damaged by their child as a result of inappropriate behavior. Example: vandalism, rock throwing, fighting, or throwing fragile equipment.

## **Family 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 School Age Child Care Program at any time. We do ask that you limit your visit to 20-30 minutes. We do not allow video cameras except on special occasions (i.e., first day of school, Halloween, etc.) or with special permission.

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

- Asking staff to be available to greet and talk to parents/guardians before and after school.
- Displaying notices, special events, and articles of interest to School Age families at each School Age Site.
- Sending home regular newsletters to inform you of our activities and plans for the future.
- Planning School Age family events throughout the year.
- Scheduling parent-staff conferences whenever needed or requested.