FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

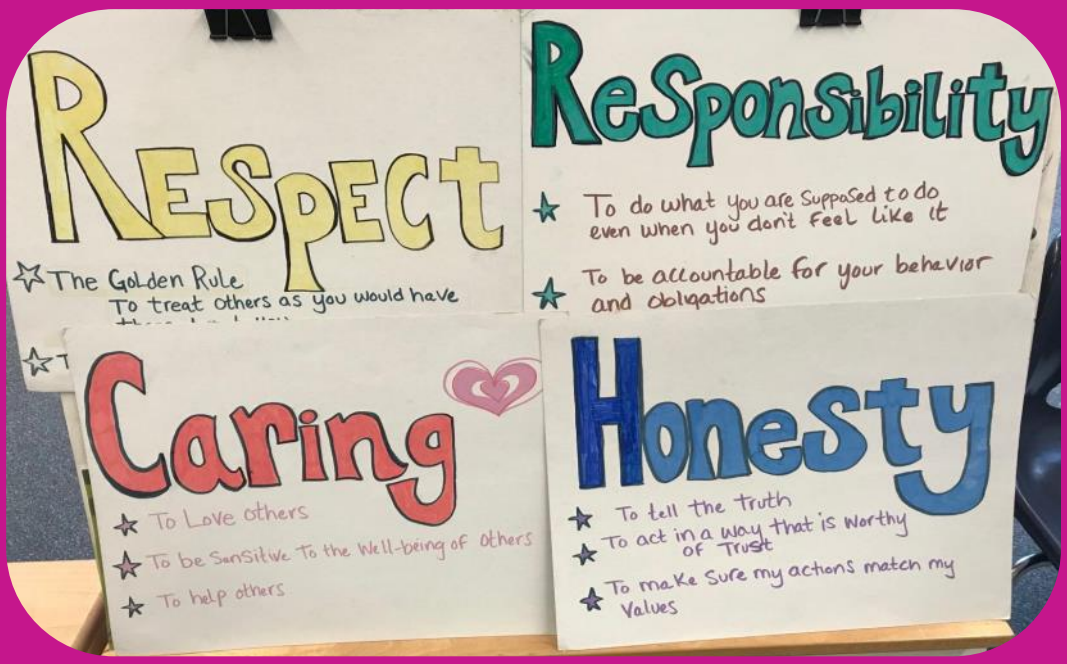
Y-ASPIRE PARENT HANDBOOK

MEETING WATERS YMCA



It is our belief that effective school-age child care and youth development programs, in general, foster social, intellectual, physical and emotional growth and development of the children involved in the program and strengthen families. We are committed to helping young people and their families live a healthy lifestyle, including promoting policies and practices in our Youth Development programs that support healthy eating and routine physical activity. ***We will provide reliable care with a purposeful curriculum in a safe and enriching environment that enables young people to learn, grow and thrive.***

For over 160 years, the YMCA movement has made a commitment to promote character development. In thousands of YMCAs around the world, program participants learn how to apply the four core YMCA values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.



OBJECTIVES

- To help children develop to their fullest potential physically, intellectually and socially.
- To deliver the program in a safe, fun, supportive, caring and positive environment.
- To support and strengthen families.
- To build lifelong memories and friendships.
- To have FUN!!

MEETING WATERS YMCA

mailing address: PO Box 511, Bellows Falls, VT 05101
administrative office: 11 A Hospital Court, Suite 6, Bellows Falls, VT 05101 phone: 463-4769
Lewis Day Camp: Route 5/Missing Link Road, Springfield, VT 05156

info@meetingwatersymca.org www.meetingwatersymca.org

Strengthening the foundations of community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Y-ASPIRE Site Phone Numbers
@ Academy School (802) 380-5476
@ Dummerston School (802) 380-5477
@ Green Street School (802) 380-5478
@ Oak Grove School (802) 380-4205
@ Bellows Falls (802)380-5474

Please call your program site phone to report absences or for other program related questions. You may leave a message at any time. Staff check phone messages at the beginning of each program day. If your child is absent and you don't call them out, Y-ASPIRE staff spend valuable time making sure your child is safe. Repeated absences without a phone call are grounds for dismissal from the program. Please do not send messages through the school or rely on the school to tell YMCA staff that your child is absent from our program.

MWYMCA main office (802) 463-4769 Call this number for billing or general information.

IMPORTANT DATES

Y-ASPIRE runs from the school dismissal time until your scheduled pick up time on all regular scheduled school days as well as most holiday, vacation, parent-teacher conferences, and teacher in-service days.

The first day of the program will be determined based on school availability and staffing, and last day of Y-ASPIRE will fall on the final full day of school.

Y-ASPIRE will be closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day – September 7th
Veterans Day - November 11th
Thanksgiving break - November 25th - 27th
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day -
December 24th & 25th
New Year's Eve and New Year's Day—
December 31 & January 1st
Martin Luther King Jr. Day—January 18th
Memorial Day – May 31st
Juneteenth - June 19th (if school is still in session)

There may be additional days where we are unable to run programs based on the schools availability and Y-ASPIRE in-service days. We will give families as much notice as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

Closing or Delayed Opening—Y-ASPIRE does not operate when school is canceled for unanticipated reasons like snow storms. Our commitment is to provide a program that meets the needs of working parents. However, for the safety of everyone involved (you, children and staff), we will open late (full day programs only), close early (any day), or cancel the program entirely (full days), if safety officials declare that the roads are unsafe for travel.

Early School Closing— On days when there is an unplanned early closing of school (i.e. - due to snow) Y-ASPIRE will begin at the early release time if it is safe to do so. We request that you pick up your child as early as possible so that you, your child(ren) and our staff are at the least risk possible while driving in inclement conditions. Early release due to weather that are planned in advance (the night before) will be considered a snow day and the program will not run. Please plan accordingly.

Closing or Delay Communication—We will make closing or delayed opening announcements through local radio stations (WKVT & WTSA) and via email to families. If the program needs to close early during regular program hours, MWYMCA staff will make calls to parents and, if not available, the emergency contacts designated on your registration forms. Your child will need to be picked up within 30 minutes of the call.

REGULAR DAY SCHEDULE

Some programs start at different times, but all follow this general schedule.

2:45	arrive/attendance
3:00	physical activity (outside, weather permitting)
3:45	wash hands/healthy snack
4:05	group activity related to monthly theme
4:45	homework/quiet play (board games, reading, arts and crafts)
4:55	clean up
5:00	free play/reading/finishing projects or homework

Quiet Time and Homework Time

Y-ASPIRE children have the opportunity to work on homework or other academic activities daily, with help from staff. Because Y-ASPIRE is an enrichment program focused on developing healthy spirit, mind and body, homework time will never be longer than 20 minutes. We believe strongly that a healthy body (healthy snack and physical activity) and healthy spirit (self-discovery and character development) are essential to a healthy mind. Based on this belief the Y-ASPIRE program makes time each day for activities that develop participants' bodies and spirits, as well as their minds.



Snack—MWYMCA provides a nutritious snack every day, or participates in the Afterschool Meals Program offered through the school. All snacks and beverages comply with the CACFP guidelines for serving sizes, food preparation, storage and service and meet our HEPA standards as outlined (on our website). If your child has any food allergies listed on your Registration Form we will do our best to accommodate alterations in the menu but may need to hold families accountable for providing their own snacks if the needs are extreme.

Clothing—Please dress your child appropriately. Children should wear clothes in which they can move freely and are comfortable. Children will play outside every day, weather permitting, so appropriate warm clothes are necessary (mittens, hat, snow pants, boots, warm coat, rain coat, etc.) Please pack additional/spare clothing as needed. Fire code require shoes to be worn at all times, therefore it is important that every child bring shoes to wear inside. Boots are not allowed on the gym floor. Please label all clothing and personal items! Meeting Waters YMCA is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items or clothing. Each child is responsible for their own belongings.

Pick-Up—Children will be released from the MWYMCA's responsibility only to those people whose names are listed as an authorized adult escort on the Registration Form, unless the parent has notified the staff otherwise, in writing or by calling the site cell phone. **Your child will not be released to anyone without your permission.** A parent or designated escort must come to where Y-ASPIRE is taking place with photo identification in order to check the child out of the program. This encourages parent-staff communication and ensures that each child has transitioned from one caring adult to another.

Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time, unannounced. If you would like time to speak to the staff please be sure to come early or schedule the time in advance as they may not be available if providing care to the children.

- **Pick-Up Time—**Pick-up time is the time you leave the program (not when you arrive) . We encourage you to come and spend time with your child, but please be sure to leave the program before your contracted pick-up time.

- **Late Pick-Up—**If you are going to be late picking up your child, you must call your Site Director as soon as possible so our staff can adjust their schedules accordingly. If you pick your child up after your contracted pick-up time, you will be billed at a rate of $5 for any part of the first 5 minutes and $1.00 per minute after that. The Site Director's cell phone will serve as the official time. *See "Occasional Care" for instructions on pre-scheduling a later pick-up time than the 5:00 option on a particular day when more care is needed.*

When you are late picking up your child, you are creating safety and regulatory problems for the Y-ASPIRE program. Therefore, if you are late picking up your child more than three times in a program year, your child will be removed from the program.

Release & Return— For any child participating in an activity outside of Y-ASPIRE during program hours, a parent must complete the appropriate release form with their Site Director. If the child is returning, that section of the form must be completed and an adult must escort the child back to the program and check in with the program staff.

Y-ASPIRE Themes—Y-ASPIRE activities are designed around monthly themes that are based on our YMCA mission, the program's purpose, stages of group development and in relation to national or global events. This year's themes are:

September: Building Our Y-ASPIRE Community
October: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility
November: Celebrating Diversity
December: Holidays Around the World
January: Kindness & Justice (part of a national youth movement in honor of Martin Luther King)
February: Our Community
March: Our World
April: The Natural World (in conjunction with Earth Day)
May: Healthy Kids/Healthy Families
June: Next Steps

Family Connection Events/Activities—Our Y-ASPIRE programs incorporate family connection activities into each month's theme-based curriculum. Family connection activities take on many forms and may include open house events, family nights, potluck dinners or family participation activities within the program. All activities incorporate the aspects of our Healthy Family Home initiative focusing on nutrition, physical activity and family connectedness. These activities help to foster deeper relationships between staff and families, between families in the program, and encouraging greater parent to parent interaction. Families who participate in the events/activities have a greater understanding of the purpose of our programs, the intention of the themes, and how the skills we are developing can be transferred to their home and other aspects of family life.

HOLIDAY/INSERVICE DAYS & VACATION

This service is available at no extra cost if your child is regularly scheduled to attend Y-ASPIRE on that day, however, **you must register ahead of time so that we can provide appropriate staffing**. Confirmation of attendance for early release days will take place at the site, at least two week in advance. Sign up for full day programs will be sent via email, at least two weeks in advance. If you do not sign-up by the designated deadline your child(ren) we not be able to attend the program on those dates. We will sometimes combine sites in Brattleboro to one or two sites for either staffing needs and/or if a school is not available.

Typical Full Day Schedule

8/8:30 arrival and quiet play (begins the time your school normally starts)
8:30 craft activity stations
9:45 clean up
10:00 healthy snack provided by MWYMCA
10:15 physical activity (games, outside play, etc.)
12:00 healthy lunch provided by parents/guardians
12:45 activity related to monthly theme
1:30 choice time (board games, reading, arts and crafts, etc.)
3:00 healthy snack provided by MWYMCA
3:30 physical activity (games, outside play, etc.)
5:00 quiet activities/clean up/pick up

Lunch — On full day programs, parents provide lunch. We ask that families provide healthy lunch options that are in keeping with our HEPA standards as outlined on our website. No soda or other sugar sweetened beverages, candy or excessive sugary treats. We are unable to heat lunches.

Drop-Off on Full Days—A parent or designated escort must accompany their child into the school and to the Y-ASPIRE location on all full day programs.

CONTRACT AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Occasional Care—Occasional Care is available for those who may need an additional day or extended time. We do not allow "switching" of days during the week. You are contracted for a set schedule. Occasional Care is billed at a rate of **$10.00 per hour or any part thereof.** For full days (vacations, holidays, etc.) the Occasional Care rate is **$70/full day**. You are financially responsible once your request has been confirmed whether your child uses the additional care or not. To request Occasional Care:

- **E-mail our main office at info@meetingwatersymca.org at least 24 hours prior to the day you need care.**
- We will determine whether or not we can meet your request.
- If approved, send a note to school with your child notifying the school that s/he will be attending Y-ASPIRE at the end of the school day.

Tuition Policies—

- Payments for Y-ASPIRE are set on an annual basis. **Monthly payments are due prior to the first of the month. Weekly payments are due by 12:00 pm on the Friday prior to the next week of service.**
- We utilize Intuit billing and parents are encouraged to set up automatic payments through an intuit account. Our preference is ACH payment to keep credit card costs down. Payments must be made by the due date (see above.)
- Failure to pay on time will result in a $5.00 late fee.
- If a balance due remains for over one week, your child will be withdrawn from the program. If, after that, the debt is paid and we have space available, you can re-enroll your child.
- If you are late in paying your contracted amount more than three times in the program year your child will be withdrawn from the Y-ASPIRE program.
- We accept state Child Care Financial Assistance (subsidy). This program helps to support families who live in Vermont, have a reason to need childcare, and meet income guidelines which have recently increased. For more information or to find out if you are eligible, contact your regional Resource and Referral Center at Winston Prouty - 257-7852 or visit https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ccfap
- Financial assistance from the Meeting Waters YMCA is available based on need and availability. Contact our main office for more information.

PLEASE NOTE:

- The full contracted rate is expected for each payment due date, **regardless of absences, vacations, holidays, or closing for poor weather.**
- Site Directors or other program staff will not accept payments, credit card information, or any other administrative paperwork.
- Questions and communications regarding your enrollment, program fees and other administrative functions should be directed to Meeting Waters YMCA's main office at 802-463-4769.

Withdraw from the Program—Must be made by **writing our main office** (PO Box 511, Bellows Falls, VT 05101 or e-mail info@meetingwatersymca.org) **two weeks prior to the final day of participation**. The letter should clearly state the date that your child will end their participation in the program. Parents are responsible for paying any fees accrued during this two week period, even if the child is no longer attending the program.

Issues relating to families receiving state Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) —

- If your child does not attend the program, and you do not call the Site Director to let them know that your child is sick, the state subsidy program may refuse to pay. If this is the case, you will be billed for the tuition for that week.
- If you request Occasional Care and your regular weekly tuition is less than the amount authorized by subsidy, the remaining subsidy balance can be put towards the Occasional Care fees.
- If you are late in picking up your child and you are charged a Late Pick Up Fee, state funding cannot be used to cover those charges. CCFA will not pay no call/no show fees.
- When your Child Care Financial Assistance application is up for review, please complete the paperwork early. If your certificate expires you will be responsible for payment.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The students and staff will co-create a set of rules and expectations for their program at the start of the school year. However, there are baseline expectations.

Please review these expectations with your child prior to his/her first day at Y-ASPIRE.

- Treat others the way they want to be treated.
- Speak and act with respect and courtesy.
- Use kind, positive words.
- Respect others' bodies, feelings and personal space.
- Stay with the program staff - It is never okay to leave your group unless you have the permission of one of the program staff.
- Respect the property of the YMCA and the property of the spaces used by Y-ASPIRE.
- Use sports, arts & craft and other equipment only for what they are made to do.
- Always clean up after yourself and put things back where they belong.
- Keep all areas clean - throw away or recycle your trash and all trash you find.
- Keep track of your belongings.
- Be sure you have everything you started with when you move from one place to the next.
- Use others' belongings only if they have allowed you to do so.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our program's approach to discipline is based on showing respect to everyone with the ultimate goal of every child having fun while growing and learning. Should a discipline problem arise, we are committed to a seven-step progressive discipline process. The aim is to use the "problem" as a learning opportunity at each step along the way. In most cases we will start the process at the beginning. We reserve the right to begin the process at any step, including immediate dismissal from the program, for serious behavior or safety concerns.

DISCIPLINE PROCESS

The typical process is as follows:

- **Redirection:** Redirect the child away from the scene of the incident to a different activity or small group.
- **Talk with child about the incident:** Discuss what happened, how it could have been resolved, what they will do differently in the future and what will happen if the same behavior happens again.
- **Remove the child from the situation:** The child will be moved from the group and the activity to a quiet, supervised spot where they can discuss the incident.
- **Incident Report:** Staff will complete an incident report and discuss the situation with the parent(s). The parent(s) will sign the report to indicate their understanding of the need for behavior changes and consequences for future violations.
- **Call parent:** If serious or repeated behavior issues occur, staff will contact the parent. In this case, a parent or designated escort must pick the child up as soon as possible (within one hour maximum) of the phone call.
- **Meeting with the parent(s):** If violations of YMCA policies and expectations occur on a repeated basis or are related to physical or emotional safety, the child will not be allowed to return to the program until our staff has had an opportunity to meet with the parent(s). Such a meeting will focus on the concerns, potential solutions and behavioral guidelines to which the child must adhere in the future.
- **Removal from the Y-ASPIRE Program:** If the behavior continues or represents an immediate threat to others' physical and emotional safety, the child will be removed from the program without a chance to return. All program fees are non-refundable for dismissal based on behavioral problems.






COMMUNICATION

Absences

You must call the site phone number whenever your child is not able to attend the program for any reason. There is voicemail service on the phone so a message can be left any time, day or night. Failing to call your child out impacts our staff and program and may result in a no call-no show fee.

Child Care Concern Line

Y-ASPIRE is a state-licensed school-age child care program. As such, its policies, procedures, staff and space requirements and more are closely regulated by the Vermont Department of Children and Families. Many of the policies and procedures outlined in this Parents' Handbook are aligned with the state's regulations. To access the Vermont School-Age Child Care licensing regulations, visit www.dcf.vermont.gov.
To be licensed requires our staff, facilities and curriculum to be of the highest quality. However, should you have any concerns, we encourage you to contact us and/or the State of Vermont's Child Care concern hotline at 1-800-649-2642, option 3.

HEALTH POLICIES

Medical/ Health Insurance

We do not carry health or medical insurance for students. Parents must include their own personal/ family insurance information on the registration form. This information will be used only if outside medical assistance is required.

Sick Child Policy

These guidelines have been established for the comfort and well-being of your child and that of other children at Y-ASPIRE. Children who do not feel well should stay home.

If a child becomes ill while at the program, we will call you. State regulations require you to pick up your child within one hour of the call.

Children will not be permitted to come to Y-ASPIRE if:

- They pose a health risk to other children,
- They are feeling so poorly that they require an excessive amount of time from staff,
- They feel so poorly they need comfort from their own parents.

Meeting Waters YMCA follows all CDC guidelines regarding severe illness like Covid, Flu or RSV.

In the event that your child develops or contracts a contagious illness or head lice, please contact the Meeting Waters YMCA within 24 hours. Treatment for head lice must be completed and all nits removed before returning.

Accidents and Injuries

We'd like to think that no child will be injured while in our care, but given there will be hundreds of students, injuries can happen. All Y-ASPIRE staff are trained in CPR and first aid. If a child has a minor injury they will be treated and cared for until they feel ready to return to activities. You will be notified of the injury when you pick your child up at the end of the program.

In case of a medical emergency, the staff will take whatever steps necessary to ensure the safety of the child. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Attempt to contact parent/legal guardian
- Attempt to contact those listed on emergency form
- Attempts to contact child's physician

If we cannot contact parent/guardian or physician we will do any or all of the following:

- contact another physician
- call an ambulance to transport child in the company of a staff member

If the emergency warrants immediate care, the Site Director will call an ambulance to transport the child to an emergency care unit and then proceed to contact parent/ guardian.

MEDICATION AT Y-ASPIRE

If you indicated on your registration form that your child needs to receive medicine during Y-ASPIRE hours, you will receive a Medication Release Form. If your child begins needing medication after you have already returned the registration forms, please call or e-mail the MWYMCA office to have the authorization form sent. All prescription medicines (including inhalers and epipen) to be administered at Y-ASPIRE must:

- Be brought in the original prescription container with a prescription label showing child's name, current and accurate dosing, time for administration, name and phone number of the prescribing doctor, and any other directions;
- Be accompanied by the Meeting Waters YMCA medication release form, or a copy is on file in the office;
- Be brought to the program or left at the school for the program staff prior to the child attending.

Emergency medication will be carried with staff at all times. Non-emergency medication will be locked up at the site. All medication will be administered as prescribed and following medication administration protocols.

Please note: We do not dispense non-prescription medication such as aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen or over the counter allergy medicine. The exception being Benadryl when prescribed as part of an allergy action plan.

Allergies/Asthma

If a child's health records indicate allergies or asthma, staff will discuss the symptoms and procedures for care with the child's parent(s). An allergy/asthma action plan, describing the issue and all steps to be taken, will be kept at the program. Parents must provided all necessary medication as indicated on the action plan including Benadryl or other antihistamine. If a child has an allergy/ asthma attack the staff will follow procedure for care as outlined on the action plan and parents will be notified immediately.

Immunization Record/Health Form

Each child is required to have up-to-date immunizations or an exemption form on file, as mandated by the Vermont Child Care Services Division. All health related information must be accurate and kept up to date. Please notify the main office of any information changes during your child's time in Y-ASPIRE.

Enrollment Documents

Information provided is considered confidential and will only be shared with those authorized to see it as required for program participation.

All original documents for children enrolled in the program will maintained for one year and will be available to parents within 5 business days of the request to the main office.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Protocol for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/ Neglect

All staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect as soon as there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect may have occurred. The following steps will, and must, be taken:

- The staff member immediately informs the Program Director and completes an incident report.
- The Program Director will review and evaluate the situation.
- The staff member will call the Division of Social Services within 24 hours of initial report.



Policy Regarding Staff Babysitting and Outside Contact

YMCA staff may not be alone with program participants outside of YMCA programs (this includes babysitting). This policy is part of our stringent Child Abuse Prevention policies and practices.

Unauthorized Individuals

Only individuals who meet background check requirements as set forth in the childcare licensing regulations will be allowed to work with or have access to children.

Emergency Procedures

Site specific emergency procedures will be provided to each family upon registration - to include reunification site in case of emergency evacuation; missing child process; and other information required by Childcare Licensing.