

YMCA Parent Handbook



2023-24

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The YMCA is pleased to provide Summer Day Camp and/or After School Care for your child(ren). By selecting the Y, you are giving your child(ren) the opportunity to benefit from a quality program that has a foundation of YMCA traditions and many years of experience in serving children and their families. Our facility and program are not regulated by DCFS. They are YMCA regulated.

We are excited to be able to provide a fun, enriching, and safe environment for your child. Our mature and experienced staff will focus on incorporating the Y's core values of: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility into our program. We will also provide opportunities for your child to learn compassion, build self-esteem, and develop lasting friendships.

This parent handbook has been designed to answer your questions, promote communication between our staff and your family, and to assist you in understanding our policies and procedures. The policies outlined in this booklet are intended to protect your child(ren) and to ensure that his /her experience at the program is positive and rewarding.

Please read the handbook carefully with your child(ren) and refer to it as needed. At the end of the handbook is a form to fill out **PRIOR** to attending the Bob Freesen YMCA's After School Program or Summer Day Camp. This form acknowledges you have read the handbook, know field trip and camp policies, and have explained unacceptable behavior to your child(ren) who are enrolled in the YMCA Program. We look forward to a tremendous year!

Sincerely,

Jessie Bonds
Childcare Director

About the Y

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening the foundation of communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Our Cause

Strengthening the foundations of community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

How We Do It

We are the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Through our three areas of focus, the Y nurtures the potential of every child and teen, improves the nation's health and well-being and provides opportunities to give back and support our neighbors.

Our Impact

The Y is, and always will be, dedicated to building healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families and communities. Every day our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child and when a community comes together for the common good.

Our Promise

The Bob Freesen YMCA has made a promise to our community to turn no one away due to the inability to pay.

Childcare Facilities:

The Y owns 26 acres in the heart of Jacksonville, where our building and facilities are located.

The YMCA Mission Statement:

The Bob Freesen YMCA mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy mind, spirit and body for all. Our three areas of focus are: youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Character Development

Ys throughout the USA strive to implement our character development program exemplifying our core values of: CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and FAITH.

These core values provide a foundation that guide all Y programs, staff trainings and operations. It is our job to give youth and adults experiences that help them develop a set of positive values, morals, and ethics to live by. The School-Age Childcare Staff strives to provide an environment focused on these Y core values. Students will be taught these core values on a consistent basis. Each child will be taught expectations of conduct while in the School-Age Childcare Program. Teaching the core values will allow students in our care to form a foundation that will provide a stable, secure base on which to build their lives.

Child Care Staff Qualifications

The quality and effectiveness of Y services for children are directly related to the skills and personal characteristics of the staff. Recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the staff are essential, interrelated processes in ensuring the success and integrity of children's programs. The leaders are required to have experience in working with children, knowledge of recreation activities, and must model the Y's core values.

Y staff are first aid and CPR certified. Background checks are conducted on all staff members. This includes a criminal background check, national sex offender public registry check, drug screen, and

reference checks. We take pride in our staff training, which includes emergency procedures, program planning, child abuse awareness, and other areas pertaining to child development.

Admissions Criteria

Participants must be between the ages of 3 through 5th grade. Parents must complete, in its entirety, the Childcare Registration Forms before the child's first day of participation. It is also our policy that every child be fully toilet trained and capable of using the facilities without assistance. We understand that accidents can occur, in which case, we would require that parents pick up their children immediately or provide clean attire. Due to staffing policies and training, if accidents begin to occur on a regular basis, the child will not be able to attend our programs.

Equal Access

The Bob Freesen YMCA, in keeping with its mission to help all people realize their fullest potential, encourages and supports the participation of all children in Y Child Care Programs. We serve all children regardless of gender, race, color, nationality, religion, ethnicity, or disability. Consideration is given to the individual needs of every child and the ability of the program to meet those needs.

Special Needs

At the Y we aim to promote an inclusive environment where all children, whatever their needs, can learn and develop in a happy, caring, and educational environment. Generally, the Y is unable to meet the needs of a child who requires a greater ratio than one staff to twelve students. These needs include social, emotional, cognitive, language, and/or motor development growth. Decisions are made on a per case basis. Upon inquiry the Y can direct you to a professional resource in the community.

Newsletter

At the beginning of each month, you will receive a newsletter that will review valuable information about your child's Y program. Please read the newsletter carefully.

Evaluations

Parent communication is one of the most important aspects in our programs. One tool we use to facilitate this is the parent evaluation. Evaluations will be conducted yearly. It is particularly important that you provide us with your current e-mail address so we can send you the evaluation link. Your input is very valuable to us.

Marketing

On occasion, the Y takes photographs, film footage, or tape recordings of our programs. This media may include your child's image or voice and is used only for purposes of promoting or interpreting Y programs. On the registration form you will be asked for permission to include your child in these promotional materials.

Staff Relationships Outside of Y Program

For the safety and protection of your child and our staff, Y employees are not allowed to babysit for program participants, spend time outside of program with our families, transport children in their private vehicles, or contact families by personal phone, email, or internet. Please do NOT put our staff at risk of losing their position with us by asking them to do so. Be advised that if a staff member fails the IDHS background check they will NOT be hired.

Homework/Academic Enrichment

Homework support is a core component of the Y School Age Curriculum. Each after school care site will provide your child the opportunity to do homework for a minimum of twenty minutes Monday through Thursday of each week. Your child will be encouraged to work on homework during the scheduled time. Staff will be available at this time to assist your child when needed. Please encourage your child to take advantage of the scheduled homework support time. If your child

does not have homework or chooses not to work on homework during the scheduled time, the staff will provide your child with alternative educational and enriching activities. Please note that we do not provide one-on-one tutoring during this time.

Program Information

Program Goals

- Provide an environment of safety, support, and care
- Focus on instilling the four core values in each student
- Develop the interpersonal skills of each student
- Provide an environment that increases the self-confidence and the feeling of self-worth for each student
- Focus on teaching each student how to be effective members of a group
- Improve the ability of parents and children to communicate with and understand each other
- Support a child's education

The following items **MAY NOT** be brought to Day Camp or After School Care:

- Fidget Spinners
- Pokémon Cards
- Cell Phones
- iPads or tablets or any electronic devices
- Toys from home, unless a specific day is announced by the counselor or YMCA staff

After School Program

Begins at school dismissal and continues until 6:00 p.m. More details including the Y curriculum are in this handbook. Please check with Mary Henry if you have any questions.

Full Day Schedules

On days when school is not in session, full-day care is offered at the Bob Freesen YMCA from 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Please send child with the following:

- Sunscreen
- Swimsuit, towel, and a bag to put swim gear in. (If your child needs goggles he/she must also bring those as there are no goggles available for lending at the pool)
- Shoes appropriate to after school/camp activities

Holiday Schedule (subject to change)

The Childcare Program does not operate on the following days:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------|--------------|
| New Year's Day | Thanksgiving | Spring Break |
| New Year's Eve | Day after Thanksgiving | |
| Memorial Day | Christmas Eve | |
| 4th of July | Christmas Day | |
| Labor Day | Good Friday | |

Inclement Weather

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily schedule. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for the weather conditions.

Heat/O-Zone Advisories

At the Y we are committed to the safety of all children. All precautions will be taken to prevent heat-related injuries. Staff are trained to do the following for your child:

- Make sure there are frequent water breaks
- Lower physical activities
- Act as role models, applying sunscreen & wearing hats outside
- Make sure campers are in the shade or indoors whenever possible
- Make sure there are opportunities for children to reapply sunscreen
- Watch for the signs of heat exhaustion

Thunderstorms

Should there be a tornado warning, all children and staff will go to the predetermined safe room. They will sit on the floor against the wall until the threat passes. Monthly drills are done for safety purposes.

Snow Closings

If School District #117 closes early due to inclement weather, The Bob Freesen YMCA After-School Program will pick up at school. If schools are not open for snow day, the YMCA program is not open.

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures

The safety of every child is a priority of the Y. Following Sign-In and Sign-Out procedures helps ensure the safety of your child and allows staff to determine which children are present at any given time.

Sign-In

For your child's safety, please park in the parking lot adjacent to the building. Do NOT park at the curb or across the street. An adult (at least 18 years old) must walk all children to the designated Childcare area. The adult must sign the child into the program by initialing next to the child's name on the attendance roster.

Under no circumstances may a child be dropped off without being signed into the program by an adult. If this occurs, the parent/guardian will be called and required to come to the Childcare site to sign their child into the program.

Sign-Out

All children must be signed out of the program by a parent/guardian or an authorized adult (at least 18 years old). When a child is picked up from the program the parent/guardian or authorized adult must come to the designated Childcare area and sign the child out of the program by initialing next to the child's name on the attendance roster. No child will be released from the program without an adult initial. All adults picking up children must be prepared to show I.D. so staff can verify their identity. For your child's protection, anyone without proper I.D. will be stopped from taking a child from the program and the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

If someone other than the parent/guardian or those on the authorization list needs to pick up your child, you must notify the Y Childcare staff in writing at least one day in advance.

Any restricted individual must have the appropriate paperwork (restraining order, court documents etc.) on file with the director.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, it is very important that you call the Bob Freesen YMCA. You may also contact the site director directly. Tracking a missing child takes staff time and resources from the program and other children at the site, therefore, repeated failure to notify the program staff of your child's absence may result in your child being dismissed from the program and/or an additional fee.

Late Pick-Up

Y childcare ends at 6:00 p.m. and our staff is scheduled to leave. If you are running late, please notify your camp director. A late pick-up fee will be assessed after the program closes. There will be an additional charge of \$10 per child, every 10 minutes starting at 6:05 p.m. payable to the YMCA. You will receive a receipt for your payment.

Parents who have not notified the director they will be late can expect the following sequence of events to occur. These steps are necessary to ensure the safety of the child as well as Y staff members.

- 6:00 p.m. Program closes. Staff member in charge begins calling parent work number to check for problems or miscommunications. If contact is not made, alternative contacts listed on the registration form will be called.
- 6:30 p.m. Staff member in charge contacts team leader, program director, and local authorities to apprise them of the situation.
- 6:45 p.m. If there is no contact from the parent and no other safe option, the child will be turned over to the city or county police department.

You risk dismissal from the program if:

- You fail to pay the late fee.
- You are late picking up your child three times within a 30-day period.

Parents must keep the Y office and staff notified of phone number changes for work, home, and emergency contacts at all times.

Payment Procedures

Program Fees

Full payment is due on the Thursday prior to the first day your child attends.

We accept cash, personal checks and credit card payments.

Financial Assistance

We believe that no one should be turned away due to inability to pay. The Bob Freesen YMCA is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening the foundations of our community, one child at a time. Our annual Strong Kids Campaign is a Y initiative that provides scholarships for programs and memberships to children and families in need. Those families unable to pay the full cost of participation are encouraged to apply, please call the Childcare office @ 245-2141 or download an application from the website. Once approved you will receive an award letter. It is your responsibility to keep your original copy as proof of your scholarship amount. You will be charged for any additional copies.

Late Payment

A late fee of \$20 will be assessed when payment is not received on time. After the third late payment, the fee will increase to \$30 per occurrence.

Delinquent Accounts

When payment on an account falls two days behind, the parent/guardian will be notified that their child cannot return to the program. Your child may return when the account is brought current or payment arrangements are made. If parent/guardian has been notified of delinquent account and sends their child to the program anyway, staff will call to have the child immediately picked up.

Insufficient Funds

If payment to the childcare program is returned due to insufficient funds, the parent/guardian is responsible for immediately issuing another payment plus all NSF fees that are assessed. After two returned checks, payment must be in the form of a money order payable at the site, or cash/credit card at the Childcare office.

Health & Safety

Medication During Program

Any medication that needs to be administered during program hours must:

- Be accompanied by "Permission to Medicate" form. (Available at each site)
- Be brought directly to the director in its original container with the child's name, physician's name, and drug name on the container.
- Have specific doctor instruction for dosage, times, etc. The Y can only administer medication according to original instructions on label. If direction from parent is different, the parent must provide a physician's written change.
- No over-the-counter medication, including aspirin, cough medicine etc will be given without a doctor's written consent.
- Staff cannot administer amounts other than specified on bottle or split pills.
- Medication will not be administered past expiration date.

Child Illness

For the sake of your child and others, if a child has a temperature of over 100 degrees, is vomiting, or shows other signs of illness, parents are asked to keep the participant at home. Parents must notify the Y of the absence and the nature of the illness. If this happens during program hours, we will call you and ask that you pick your child up within one hour.

Illness/Injury Occurring During Program Hours

The Y does not aim to exclude children from the program unnecessarily. The Y's illness/injury policies are based on the following criteria:

- Preventable public health practices
- The comfort and safety of the sick child
- The staff's ability to accommodate or care for a sick child
- The protection of the other students, staff and parents from communicable disease conditions

If your child becomes ill/injured, they will be isolated from the other children and you will be contacted to pick him or her up with in one hour of notification (depending on the severity of the injury or illness). The YMCA is not equipped to handle ill/injured children beyond securing their immediate comfort. If you cannot be reached, we will contact someone you have authorized from your emergency contact on the Health and Registration form for immediate pick up. Please be sure to keep the YMCA informed of any changes in your work or emergency phone numbers. In an emergency, medical aid will be sought immediately.

For the safety of your child, gym shoes (closed toe/heel with rubber bottom-no heelys or spinners) are required.

Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases are diseases that are transmitted from one individual to another and easily spread among children. Common communicable diseases among children are head lice, pink eye, ringworm, COVID and chickenpox. The following policies have been created to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

Head Lice

The Y reserves the right to inspect your child's head in the event lice is suspected in order to protect all of the other students, staff, and parents.

- In the event nits/head lice are found among your child, a parent/guardian must pick up the child within one hour of the notification.
- The Y will notify all parents of all head lice/nits cases when found or reported.
- If nits/head lice are found outside of the Y care, parents/guardians must contact the Director immediately so proper notification can be made to the other parents.
- Students with nits/head lice must not return to Y care until 24 hours after first treatment is complete.

Same policies apply to all other communicable diseases. If school policies differ from Y policies, the school policies will be followed.

Confidentiality

Any information in a child's record that is sensitive will be kept in a secure place.

Illinois State Police "No Firearms" Signs

Firearms Are Prohibited on the premises

Illinois State Police "No Firearms" signs are posted at all entrances

- No firearms of any kind are allowed on the any of the premises of the Bob Freesen YMCA

Behavior Management Procedures

Philosophy

The Y strives to maintain a positive approach to managing children's behavior at all times. "Discipline" is the process of teaching self-control and the ability to live within limitations and agreed upon guidelines. The staff and children at each site establish expected behavior guidelines. Positive behavior is self-rewarding and allows for program activities to occur. When children choose to behave outside the guidelines, some consequence is required to avoid future problems. The overall safety of all children in the program is our highest priority.

Children's Rules

It is our intent that each child enjoys the planned activities by understanding that they are responsible for their actions. With prior knowledge of our basic rules of safety and good conduct, each child is made aware of how to exercise self-discipline and to understand that we are here to assist her or him and that we expect them to succeed. Character Development is an important part of our program.

Process

When positive behavior is displayed, the consequence is participation and enjoyment of planned activities. In cases of negative or inappropriate behavior, the follow process will be employed.

- **Redirection:** Every effort will be made to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his or her actions and agree to an alternate form of behavior. When the conflict is child-to-child, every effort will be made to have them reason together face-to-face with staff

facilitating.

- **Removal from the Specific Activity:** When redirection has been pursued and behavior has not changed, removing the child from the activity involved for an appropriate amount of time is necessary. The removal time will be age appropriate. Other duty-oriented consequences suitable to the inappropriate behavior may also be utilized at this stage.
- **Write-ups:** When the child is not successful in correcting the behavior, or the behavior is of a serious nature, a behavior write-up will occur. This write-up will be discussed with the child and parent and requires a parent signature. If a child receives three write-ups a parent conference is required.
- **Removal from the Program:** If the above process has not resulted in corrected behavior, the child may be removed from the program.

Serious Behavior Issues

When a child has a serious discipline problem, on any one occasion, the parent may be called by staff and asked to pick up the child within one hour of the call. Should it be decided by Y staff that a child poses a serious problem, the child may be suspended from the program for a period of one to five days or may be re-moved from the program entirely. No child will be allowed to continue in the program who becomes a safety hazard to him/herself or others. In addition to behavior management procedures outlined above, parents must be aware that a child may be released from the program, without refund, for the following misconduct:

- Leaving Y care premises without permission, or going into unauthorized areas
- Using foul language, being rude or discourteous to staff and other children
- Defacing property
- Physical Violence (fighting, biting, putting hands on another child, threatening)
- Bringing or using any illegal substances and weapons
- Any demonstration of sexual contact/words
- Any behavior that jeopardizes the safety of staff or participants
- Stealing

Other Behavior Related Issues

No staff member will ever strike, swear at, abuse, or threaten with physical intimidation either a child or parent. No staff member will allow a child to be stricken, sworn at, abused or physically intimidated by anyone else in the program. No staff member will ever solicit or accept gratuities in consideration for any treatment of a child.

Parents or guardians are advised and understand that the facility and program is not licensed or regulated by DCFS.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS TO DISCUSS WITH SUMMER DAY CAMP/AFTER SCHOOL CARE CHILD

*Please discuss these rules with your Summer Day Camp/Afterschool Care child(ren). After reading and discussing with Day Camp/ Afterschool Care child(ren), the parent/guardian must sign and have the Summer Day Camp/Afterschool Care child(ren) sign and return the following form to the Childcare Director **one week prior** to beginning day camp/daycare. If not returned with signature(s), your child will not participate in day camp/afterschool care.*

Unacceptable Behaviors at the YMCA Summer Day Camp/Afterschool Programs

Bullying:

Including, but not limited to:

- Name Calling
- Teasing
- Any type of physical aggression
- Disrespect of other campers or afterschool participants

Disrespecting of Counselor or YMCA Staff:

Including, but not limited to:

- Ignoring requests, not listening and following directions
- Physical aggression towards a counselor or YMCA staff member
- Running away or hiding from a counselor or YMCA staff member
- Disrespecting a counselor or YMCA staff member

Other Unacceptable Behaviors:

Including, but not limited to:

- Talking about inappropriate things
- Fighting
- Negative comments made at or about from a counselor, other campers or afterschool participants, or YMCA staff member
- Inappropriate language (verbal or written)
- Disrespecting property (YMCA, counselor, other campers or afterschool participants YMCA staff) e.g., throwing furniture, breaking toys (on purpose), tearing up books.

Acknowledgement / Signature Form

I understand the rules and guidelines regarding field trips, fees, behaviors and consequences as read and explained in the YMCA Parent Handbook. I also understand the unacceptable behaviors for YMCA Day Camp and/or the YMCA Afterschool Program.

I am confirming that I have received and read the YMCA Parent Handbook and that I understand the policies and procedures within this Handbook and am in agreement with the conditions outlined and will abide by the same. In addition, I have discussed the unacceptable behaviors with my child. I am (we are) in agreement and understand the consequences set forth by the Bob Freesen YMCA Parent Handbook for Day Camp and/or Afterschool Programs in regard to my child participating in field trips.

I understand that all family forms are destroyed by the YMCA immediately after the program ends.

Date

Child's Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Child's Signature

