



2019-2020 School-Age Childcare Parent Handbook ***Before-School Program*** ***After-School Program***



**The policies and procedures in this book are subject to change.
The Colonie Youth Center, Inc., is an independent non-profit organization.**

PROGRAM MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

The Colonie Youth Center, Inc. (CYC) is a private non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing the living experience for all people in the greater Capital Region.

CYC accomplishes this through the provision of quality childcare, recreation, education, health and fitness services and programs for youth, adults and seniors.

It is the philosophy of the CYC School-Age Childcare (SACC) Program to provide a child-centered environment in which children are given the opportunity to grow, learn, socialize and have fun.

CYC's childcare staff is committed to providing quality care for your child. All staff meet requirements set forth by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). CYC provides its staff with ongoing training throughout the year to ensure that we reach a high standard of care for your child.

All CYC SACC programs are child-centered in nature. This means that all activities are developmentally age-appropriate and are geared toward the interests and needs of individual children. Children are encouraged to participate in daily recreational activities and are able to choose their own activities.

CYC's Before-School and After-School Programs are registered with the NYS OCFS.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The policies and procedures of the CYC Childcare Programs are detailed in this handbook. Please take the time to review all of the information. At the bottom of each application a parent/guardian must sign a statement verifying that they have received, reviewed, understand and agree to abide by all regulations and policies contained therein. Please retain this handbook for future reference

BEFORE-SCHOOL / AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM PROCEDURE

Our goal is to provide children with a safe, healthy and active atmosphere where they can engage in a number of age-appropriate recreational activities. Each activity that your child chooses will run from 30 – 45 minutes in length. Examples of activities and materials that are available for use are as follows: arts & crafts, gym games, dramatic play, homework, outdoor play, learning centers and building materials.

Before-school and after-school programs use the cafeteria, gymnasium and playground of each school. In select schools, additional rooms are used. Whenever children are moved to a different location in the school, a sign will be posted in the program areas advising parents/guardians of the location change.

Once children are signed in with our program they must stay in the designated area(s).

CYC will provide equipment and supplies for your child to use during our program. We would recommend that children not bring toys and games from home except when allowed for a scheduled program activity such as props for a talent show, reward for good behavior, etc. All electronics are prohibited per OCFS regulations unless they are used as part of a planned activity or individual health care plan.

Children will be given the opportunity for outdoor activities when weather permits and provided they have appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.

There is an information board posted at each program where parents/guardians can review the activity plans for each day as well as other CYC information. Please refer to this board daily.

The use of **cell phones** by children is prohibited during program hours. This includes cell phone calls, text messages, and picture taking. In the event of an emergency, and with staff permission, students will be allowed to call their parent/guardian. All cell phones found being used during program hours will be taken and stored with the program supervisor until the child is picked up. The phone will be returned to the individual who picks the child up on that day.

CYC is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items brought from home.

CYC is a guest in the schools. CYC expects that accidents and normal wear and tear will occur. However, parents/guardians are responsible for the cost of any intentional damage to the facility, property or equipment caused by their child.

ELIGIBILITY

All children must meet the following guidelines for enrollment in the before-school and/or after-school program:

- Child must be in Kindergarten to 8th grade (but no older than 13) to attend the before-school and/or after-school program at a school in the South Colonie School District.
- Child must be in Kindergarten to 6th grade to attend the before-school and/or after-school program in the North Colonie School District.
- All children who enroll in our SACC programs must meet the age/grade requirements as well as the following guidelines:
 1. Children must be able to function in a 1:10 staff/child ratio.
 2. Children must be fully toilet trained and able to use the facilities independently.
- CYC will make reasonable accommodations to serve children with disabilities or behavioral concerns and will evaluate each situation individually. Based on the results of the evaluation CYC may or may not be able to serve the needs of the child.
- Please contact our administrative office to speak with our program specialist if you have any questions/concerns regarding these eligibility requirements.

NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL OF ENROLLMENT IN CYC PROGRAMS

Any child enrolled in our after-school program must bring a written note to their teacher on the first day of school or first day they will be attending our after-school program stating that they should report to our after-school program at dismissal.

SITES

Before-school and after-school programs are offered at all North and South Colonie Elementary Schools and at 15 Avis Drive in Latham. After-school programs are also offered at the South Colonie Middle Schools. Enrollment at each program is subject to state regulations, space restrictions and staff availability.

DATES AND HOURS OF PROGRAMS

Before-School and After-School Programs

Programs begin operation on the first day of school in September and continue until the last day of school in June.

- **Before-school** programs are held every school day from 7:00am to the beginning of the school day.
- **After-school** programs are held every FULL school day from school dismissal until 6:00pm.

RATIOS

All of our childcare programs are mandated to maintain the following ratios:

- 1 staff to every 10 children through age 9
- 1 staff to every 15 children ages 10 – 12

Children unable to independently work within these mandated ratios may be unable to participate or continue in the program.

CYC reserves the right to limit the number of children accepted into the programs based on space restrictions and staff availability.

HOW TO REACH THE CHILD CARE STAFF

Each of our programs is equipped with a cell phone so that you may contact staff during program hours only. You may leave a voice or text message for the childcare staff and they will return your call as necessary. For immediate assistance during non-program hours, you may call the administrative office.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

For your child's safety, it is required that you sign the attendance sheet and indicate the time of arrival at the site and/or at the end of each day before leaving the program. CYC is not responsible for children who are not signed in at our childcare programs.

PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION & PROCEDURE

No one other than the parents/guardians and those listed on the application will be permitted to pick up your child. Anyone (including parents/guardians) picking up your child will be asked for picture identification until such time that the staff is sure of their identity. All persons authorized to pick up your child must be at least 16 years of age. The childcare staff is not able to keep a parent/guardian from picking up their child unless there is legal documentation on file. If this pertains to your family, please attach a copy of the signed legal document to your child's application. These procedures are solely for the protection of your child.

SNACK AND FOOD ALLERGIES

CYC provides a nutritious snack for your child at the after-school program; all snacks served by CYC meet CACFP guidelines. Many children in our care have food allergies to such items as peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, dairy and fructose. In some cases the children's reactions to their allergen is mild but in other cases it is quite severe, even fatal. The most severe allergies are often from peanuts and/or tree nuts. For that reason, CYC makes every effort to serve peanut-free and tree nut-free foods in our programs. This is determined by the nutritional label located on packaging.

If your child's application indicates a food allergy, you may be contacted for additional information.

LOST AND FOUND

At each program there is a lost and found where parents/guardians may check for missing items. Items left behind at the end of the school year may be held for two weeks at the CYC Administrative Office. After two weeks, items will be donated.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Maintaining the safety of your children and our staff is our number one priority. The following policies have been put in place to assist us in obtaining that goal.

CYC maintains regular communication with the North and South Colonie School districts, as well as the Colonie Police Department to ensure optimal safety and security at all locations. Many of our safety and security measures have been designed in conjunction with the school districts. Please be aware that security procedures - including but not limited to entry procedures and use of security cameras - and emergency evacuation plans, vary from location to location. To learn more about specific procedures related to the program your child attends, please review the information posted at your child's site or contact the CYC administrative office.

Emergency Communication Procedure

From time to time, events such as power outages, a disruption in the water supply, an airborne illness or a weather related emergency may occur. When this happens, CYC will communicate using any or all of the following methods: e-mail, text, phone, social media and local media outlets. To ensure receipt of information via these methods, please include CYC on your safe senders list and provide authorizations as necessary. It is best to rely on more than one source of information when it comes to emergency announcements.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of a school evacuation during program hours, your child will be transported to the nearest school or to the Rudy A. Ciccotti Family Recreation Center 30 Aviation Rd. Albany, NY, 12205 (518-867-8920). Specifics for your relocation site will be available at your child's program location. Should an emergency evacuation take place, the childcare staff will notify parents/guardians.

Inebriated Parent/Guardian

Parents/guardians or anyone picking up a child who staff feel are under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to arrange alternative transportation. If the pick-up person refuses to arrange for alternative transportation and/or the pick-up person becomes violent or belligerent, staff as mandated reporters, will be obligated to make a report to the appropriate authorities.

Court Orders

Employees of CYC are not able to keep a parent from picking up their child unless there is legal documentation on file with CYC. Families who have legal documentation regarding their children should submit a copy to the CYC Administrative Office. This also applies to a parent who may not be listed on the application. In the event that a parent is not listed on the application but supplies proof that they are the parent, they will have access to your child's information unless we have a court document prohibiting it. CYC reserves the right to seek legal counsel at the parent's/guardian's expense should disagreements occur between said parties.

Confidentiality of Records

Information contained in your child's file is privileged and confidential and will not be released without the written consent of a parent/guardian unless required by law. Authorized representatives from OCFS have the right to review all records upon request.

We do, however, share application information, attendance records, behavior reports and accident reports with all parents or legal guardians, upon request, unless we have a court order on file prohibiting us from doing so. Therefore, if you wish to prohibit a parent from accessing your child's attendance records, from adding a pick-up authorization or otherwise changing their application (i.e. adding an emergency contact) we must have a valid court order or custody agreement which clearly defines the parameters of what each parent is permitted or prohibited from doing.

Photo Release

CYC reserves the right to take and publish photographs of children who are enrolled in our programs. However, names of children will not be published. Please indicate on your child's application whether or not you give permission for your child's photograph to be used for promotional purposes.

BEFORE-SCHOOL / AFTER-SCHOOL GENERAL POLICIES

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT/CODE OF CONDUCT

Please review the following rules with your child before the program begins:

While in the program, children are expected to display age appropriate behavior and follow established rules including, but not limited to:

- Respect other children, staff and property
- Follow staff direction
- Stay with a staff member and within program areas at all times*
- Adhere to rules regarding building and playground safety
- Refrain from using foul language or other forms of verbal abuse
- No fighting or other physical altercations
- Adhere to the school or town Code of Conduct

Staff will address minor behavior issues and conflicts by guiding children to resolve their own conflicts. Staff will document the behavior or conflict and the parent/guardian will be notified at pick-up. If inappropriate behavior continues, a parent/guardian-staff meeting may be required to develop a behavior plan. If the behavior does not cease, CYC reserves the right to suspend or terminate services.

If a child exhibits behavior that is more severe such as fighting, verbal abuse, physical altercations, endangering the welfare of others, assault, vandalism, running away from the program, hiding from staff or leaving the program area without staff supervision, a parent/guardian may be notified that the child must be picked up within 30 minutes. Based on the nature and severity of the behavior, CYC reserves the right to suspend or terminate services.

**If your child leaves the program area, leaves the school building, or leaves the school grounds a CYC staff member will do everything possible to stay with your child for their safety. You and/or your emergency contacts may be contacted for immediate pick-up or notification. Police may be called as the situation deems necessary.*

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please list any allergies, medical conditions, prescriptions or special concerns in the designated area on your child's application or add an extra sheet if necessary. Any information that we have regarding your child and/or any school services that they receive will be extremely helpful to the childcare staff that works with your child each day. You may be contacted if additional information is required.

MEDICATION

CYC administers **emergency medications only**. These medications are limited to epinephrine auto injector devices (epi-pen), asthma inhalers, and nebulizers. CYC may administer diphenhydramine only when prescribed in conjunction with an epi-pen. If the doctor indicates "Benadryl" on the consent form, Benadryl® brand must be provided and not a generic form of the medication.

Administration of emergency medication will require written permission from the parent/guardian and written instructions from a health care provider on the OCFS approved medical consent form stating that the CYC School-Age Childcare Program may administer such medication and listing the side effects of the medication and the signs and symptoms of the medical condition. Every **12 months** we must obtain a new medical consent form from the health care provider. Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, the medication's name, recommended dosage, and time intervals for administration, method of administration and expiration date.

An individualized health care plan will be developed for each child utilizing medications. CYC will maintain first aid and CPR certified staff at each location so these medications may be administered by trained staff. Staff administering these medications will be at least 18 years of age. In the event that an epi-pen is administered we will call 911 immediately. We will also call 911 if a participant's breathing does not return to normal after the administration of an inhaler/nebulizer.

PLEASE NOTE: CYC staff does not transport medications between programs. If your child attends our before and/or after-school program and registers for our vacation camp or summer camp program, a parent/guardian must transport the medication to the different site or bring additional medication to the camp site.

ILLNESS

In the event of an airborne or foodborne illness, or other contagious conditions (strep, head lice, chicken pox, etc.), parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the outbreak and related symptoms. If the illness is gastro-intestinal, the site director will monitor the medical log for other suspected cases.

Per OCFS, children with a contagious illness will be excluded from the program until a note from a doctor indicating they are no longer contagious is on file. If a child becomes ill with these symptoms while at program they will be given a place to rest in full view of the staff. Parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick the child up within one hour.

INJURIES

Staff will attend to children experiencing minor injuries such as scrapes, bumps or bruises and the child will be given first aid. All injuries will be documented in our medical log and the parent/guardian will be notified. In case of a more serious injury, 911 will be called and the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately. If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the emergency contact list will be called (*please be sure to notify us any time phone numbers change for yourself or anyone on your emergency contact list!*). A staff member, along with your child's file, will accompany the injured child and stay until the parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives at the hospital.

SUSPECTED ABUSE, MALTREATMENT OR NEGLECT

All childcare staff are mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect to New York State Child Protective Services. If a staff person suspects abuse they will call the child abuse hotline.

ABSENTEE POLICY

After-School Program

In the event of illness or absence from our after-school program please call CYC at 518-438-9596 or e-mail info@colonieryouthcenter.org prior to 2:00pm.

When a child is expected at the after-school program and does not arrive at the appropriate time, the following steps will be taken:

- Staff will contact CYC for messages from parents regarding absent children.
- Staff will check with the school office for absentees and early dismissals.
- Staff will check with the child's classroom teacher.
- Staff will contact parents/guardians and/or any people listed on the child's application.
- If parents/guardians and emergency contacts cannot be reached, a call may be placed to the Colonie Police Department.

Children enrolled in a school-based program and attending a school activity (intramurals, roller-skating, service club, etc.) must first check in with the after-school supervisor. All children must have a written note from a parent/guardian stating that the child has permission to go to the school activity. (If you wish to have your child return to the after-school program, please indicate in the note the location of the activity and what time to expect your child to return to the after-school program.)

Before-School Program

It is required that all parents/guardians sign their children in to the before-school program. CYC does not require parents/guardians to report absences from this program.

CLOSINGS

If the North and/or South Colonie School Districts close due to inclement weather or another type of emergency, CYC will not operate the before-school or after-school childcare program in that district. 15 Avis Drive follows North Colonie School District closing procedures. If both districts close, the CYC Administrative Office will also be closed. When CYC lists closings or delays on local television news stations and the Times Union website, the abbreviations are as follows and are subject to change:

- NO AM Program = Before-School Programs will not operate
- NO After-School Programs = After-School Programs will not operate
- NO BSP/ASP = Before-School, After-School Programs will not operate

DELAYS

If the North and/or South Colonie School Districts delay the opening of school for any reason, CYC will not operate a before-school program.

EARLY DISMISSAL

In the event of an early dismissal from school (15 minutes or more before regular dismissal time – due to inclement weather or another type of emergency) the after-school program will **not** operate.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's school office has the proper emergency dismissal information in the event that the after-school program is cancelled. In the event that inclement weather is severe or an emergency arises that is beyond our control, the CYC administrative staff reserves the right to close the program prior to 6:00pm.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their child to the before-school program and from the after-school program.

15 Avis Drive Program

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program. The North Colonie School District provides transportation to school in the morning and to 15 Avis Drive in the afternoon.

CYC staff are prohibited from transporting children in their personal vehicles for any reason.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

The CYC After-School Program ends at 6:00 pm. Parents/guardians will be charged a fee of \$15.00 per child for each 15 minutes, or any part thereof, that they are late in picking up their child. The clock at the program site will be used to determine the late fee. There will be a late pick-up form that parents/guardians must sign when arriving to pick up their child. This form will be submitted to CYC's Administrative Office and parents/guardians will be invoiced. Payment will be due upon receipt. In the event of consistent tardiness, a meeting may be called to discuss the situation.

In the event that the parent/guardian knows that they are going to arrive after 6:00pm, they must call the program staff. If the program staff does not receive a call from the parent/guardian, the following steps will be taken:

- A staff person will attempt to contact parents/guardians and/or the emergency contacts listed on the child's application.
- In the event that a child is left in our care after one hour from the official closing time and parents/guardians and emergency contacts cannot be reached, a call may be placed to Child Protective Services or to the Colonie Police Department.

WAITING LIST

CYC maintains a waiting list for children in need of the before-school and/or after-school program on a first-come, first-serve basis. A waitlist is started once re-enrollment is completed and all open spots have been filled.

COMMUNICATION

E-mail is CYC's primary method of communication. We request a valid e-mail address on all applications which will be utilized for financial matters, emergency information, periodic program announcements and any other pertinent CYC information. To ensure receipt of all e-mails, please add colonieyouthcenter.org to your address book. E-mail addresses will not be shared with third parties.

Although we make every effort to maintain current contact information in our database, it remains the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that correct information is on file.

If you would like more than one e-mail address listed on your child's account, please contact the CYC office at 518-438-9596. The office is open Monday – Friday from 8:30am – 4:30pm unless otherwise posted.

BEFORE-SCHOOL / AFTER-SCHOOL FINANCIAL POLICIES

ENROLLMENT CHANGES

Withdrawal from the before-school and/or after-school program(s) requires written notification to the administrative office at least **two weeks prior to the child's last day of attendance**. Failure to give notice will result in continued charges to your account. All changes to the CYC School-Age Childcare registration form must be submitted in writing to the CYC Administrative Office.

NOTE: Lack of attendance or notification to staff at program site does not suffice as withdrawal notification. Staff at program sites may not submit enrollment changes to the administrative office (this feature is to ensure that only parents/guardians may withdraw a child from a program). A withdrawal notification must be submitted by the parent/guardian who signs the application form.

All other changes such as address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc. should be submitted in writing to the CYC Administrative Office.

PAYMENTS

Before-School and/or After-School Programs

Payments are due on the 15th of the month prior to the month of service. (For example, payment for September services is expected on August 15th, payment for October services is expected on September 15th and so on.) A \$15.00 late fee will be incurred if payment is not received by the 17th of each month or if the 17th falls on a holiday or a weekend, finance charges will accrue on the last business day prior to the 17th.

Payments types accepted: cash, check or money order (with the exception of starter, post-dated or third party checks) and credit/debit cards (with the exception of flexible spending cards). Credit/debit card payments can be made on-line, via automatic monthly charge*, by phone or in person during regular business hours. Check or money order payments can be made by mail or in person. Cash payments must be made in person to administrative staff during regular business hours. Note: on-site program staff are unable to accept payments.

*If you would like your payment to be automatically charged each month, please complete and return the Credit Card Authorization form which can be found on our website at www.coloniyouthcenter.org and at our administrative office.

RETURNED CHECKS/DECLINED CREDIT CARDS

Checks returned to CYC by our bank will be assessed a \$35.00 service charge. We DO NOT redeposit returned items. Any credit/debit card that declines twice in the same month will be assessed a \$15.00 service fee. Payments, along with service fees, must be submitted to CYC within five business days of notification. Any customer who has two months of returned/declined payments within one program year may be required to remit payment in cash for the remainder of the program year.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Customers are expected to make timely payments. If an account is more than three days past due it is considered in arrears, a late fee is assessed and we reserve the right to terminate services for any and all CYC programs. Both parents/guardians will receive all account notices unless legal documentation is on file directing otherwise.

REFUND PROCEDURE

Before-School and/or After-School

CYC will accept written requests for refunds. Determination of a refund amount, if any, will be made on a case-by-case basis. When requests for withdrawal are received, your account will be adjusted accordingly and any resulting credit balance will be refunded via credit card if applicable or by check. Please allow up to one month for the refund to process.

RECEIPTS

- Annual statements will be mailed to the account-holder by January 31st. (The parent/guardian who signed the application is the account-holder.)
- Monthly receipts are e-mailed upon request only.

DEPENDENT CARE/FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

- Form signatures are provided in person, fax or e-mail.
- Custom receipts are e-mailed upon request only. (Year-end receipt requests may take up to 3 weeks to process.)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Colonie Youth Center Scholarship Program

Each spring, CYC applies for scholarship dollars funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Block Grant through the Town of Colonie. These funds, if awarded, allow CYC to offer financial assistance to families in CYC Before-School and After-School childcare programs. Funding assistance does not include CYC Vacation Camps or CYC Summer Camps and attendance requirements apply. To qualify for the Community Block Grant, you must meet specific income guidelines, you must live in the Town of Colonie and you must be employed. Certain exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The application process usually begins in the late spring for the start of the school year in September. Availability and guidelines change on an annual basis and will be updated on our website as they become available. Parents/guardians must apply for scholarship funds each year. Inquiries may be made by calling our office after June 1st of the current school year.

Department of Social Services (DSS)

CYC works with the Department of Social Services to assist families receiving subsidies for childcare. Subsidies for before-school childcare, after-school childcare, vacation camps and/or summer camps must be documented on the Department of Social Services Child Care Subsidy Benefit Notification as applicable. Parents/guardians must file the appropriate paperwork with DSS for authorization and submit childcare applications to CYC for each child applying to our program, in addition to any required application fees. CYC will then supply DSS with a registration confirmation. Parents/guardians are financially responsible for all charges not covered by DSS. These charges may be subject to change throughout the school year. CYC shares no responsibility in the determination of subsidies awarded by DSS and must follow all guidelines set forth, including monthly attendance reports. Please speak with your case worker regarding DSS policy questions. For new cases, please call the DSS Intake Line at 518-447-7435.

PLEASE NOTE: Families are not eligible to receive more than one subsidy per child.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Please direct all questions regarding this handbook, enrollment, billing or concerns about our programs to the CYC Administrative Office at 15 Avis Drive, Latham, NY 12110 or by calling 518-438-9596. The office is open Monday – Friday from 8:30am – 4:30pm unless otherwise posted. E-mail requests can be sent to info@colonieyouthcenter.org. Visit our website at www.colonieyouthcenter.org to see everything that CYC has to offer you and your entire family!