

THE FOOTHILLS AREA YMCA CHILDCARE PARENT HANDBOOK



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ARTICLE I: WELCOME

First, we would like to say thank you for choosing us to care for your child. We are excited to have you as part of our YMCA family. Our goal is to provide a positive experience that will last a lifetime through activities that promote the mission of the Foothills Area YMCA.

The YMCA is committed to developing strong character in individuals through activities that promote our four core values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We want your child's experience to be filled with opportunities to try new things, learn, grow, and make long-lasting friendships.

Section 1. Mission and Child Care Philosophy

Our mission is "guided by our Christian principles, we strengthen the spirit, mind and body of all individuals."

The YMCA opens its doors to anyone, regardless of race, gender identity, religion or socioeconomic background, and we are committed to serving everyone who comes in. As a result, we look to meet each person where they are at, including providing opportunities for financial assistance.

Child Care Philosophy

The YMCA Childcare Programs are geared towards the individual needs of children. Each program provides a play-centered environment with a wide range of materials and developmentally appropriate activities, which allow children to manipulate, discover, explore, make choices, and create according to their interests. Each child is recognized and valued as a unique individual with a capacity for growth and development. Through group and individual activities, each child is encouraged to develop emotionally, socially, creatively, and intellectually, at his/her own rate.

Our definition of quality is formed from incorporating standards established by the YMCA of the USA, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and most importantly, the needs of the individual children and families we serve.

The essential component of our childcare program is our staff. Staff are trained in growth and development, and establish age appropriate expectations. Staff guide and direct children with warmth, concern, acceptance, approval, and respect; enabling children to develop a strong, positive self-concept. A warm and responsive atmosphere is provided to foster a sense of trust and autonomy, as well as to encourage cooperation, communication, and respect for others.

The YMCA strongly believes that quality childcare is only possible when families are involved in the makeup of the program, both directly and indirectly.

Section 2. Our Staff

The YMCA Child Care Staff members are committed first and foremost to the safety of your child. We place a serious emphasis on safety standards through our ratio guidelines, Child Abuse Awareness training, CPR and First Aid certifications, and specific training in the areas of working with children, discipline, group dynamics, mental health, safety and programming. All YMCA staff go through background checks prior to hiring and annually.

ARTICLE II: CHILDWATCH

Section 1. Childwatch Environment

The Childwatch program is a drop-in child care program serving children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. It is a benefit to those with a Foothills Area YMCA family membership and can be used for up to 90 minutes per shift. This service adds value to the family membership and provides parents with the peace of mind knowing their child is in a safe, quality environment while they achieve their health and wellness goals. For many of you, this may be your child's first experience with the YMCA. Our goal is to provide your child with a safe, caring environment designed to stimulate intellectual, emotional, and physical growth.

There is an infant/toddler area for children ages 6 weeks to 18 months old sectioned off from the remainder of the program area. The remainder of the program area is designed for a mixed age group, including children over 18 months, preschool and school aged children.

Like most philosophies on childhood development, the YMCA philosophy stresses the importance of play, hands-on learning, and the development of the whole child. Our Childwatch environment provides activities that support this philosophy. Childwatch staff will initiate activities to engage children in a variety of experiences, including arts and crafts, music and movement, and projects focused on building with the use of blocks and manipulatives.

Section 2. Hours of Operation and Holidays

- A. Hours of Operation
 - a. Monday-Thursday: 8:00am - 12:00pm | 4:25pm - 8:00pm
 - b. Friday: 8:00am - 12:00pm | 4:25pm - 6:30pm
 - c. Saturday: 8:00am - 12:00pm
 - d. Sunday: Closed
- B. Holiday Closures
 - a. The Childwatch program will be closed on the following holidays:
 - i. New Year's Day
 - ii. Memorial Day
 - iii. Independence Day
 - iv. Labor Day
 - v. Thanksgiving Day

- vi. Christmas Eve
- vii. Christmas Day
- viii. New Year's Eve

Section 3. 90 Minute Policy and Late Pick Up

The 90 minutes for each child starts when a child is checked into Childwatch. Each child can only participate in Childwatch for 90 minutes per Childwatch shift. This means a child can attend for 90 minutes in the morning and 90 minutes in the afternoon, but no more than 90 minutes per Childwatch shift. The 90 minutes also cannot be broken up into "sections" during one shift.

If a child is not picked up within the 90 minute period, then the parent is considered late. In the event that your child is picked up late, you will be reminded of the 90 minute allowance. Parents/guardians who repeatedly pick up their child after the 90 minute period has expired, will be charged \$1.00/minute over the 90 minute allowance. Repeated offences may put you at risk of losing their option to use the Childwatch program.

Section 4. What to Bring / What Not to Bring

The YMCA recommends that toys, tablets, and electronic devices are NOT brought from home. However, if these items are brought in, then please abide by the following guidelines:

1. The items should be clearly labeled with your child's name
2. DO NOT bring in any items that pose a choking hazard to smaller children
- 3. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items**

Also, please note that if your child brings in a tablet or electronic device, they will not be permitted to watch any videos or log in to any websites that are not appropriate for small children. If our associates discover that your child is logged on to or watching any inappropriate material, then they will not be permitted to bring the item back to the Childwatch area.

Food/Drinks/Bottles

At this time, no food is permitted in the Childwatch program area. Children can bring a water bottle and we will provide water as well. Childwatch staff are permitted to bottle feed infants and toddlers if the bottle is prepared by the parent upon arrival.

Section 5. Sign In and Sign Out Process

Sign In

1. When entering Childwatch, please scan your barcode card or give your name and your child's name to the staff member at the computer.
2. Indicate your intended location in the facility and if another parent/guardian or authorized individual will be picking your child up
- 3. You must remain at our facility while your child is in Childwatch**

Sign Out

1. When picking up your child, please sign your child out with a Childwatch Attendant at the computer
2. A staff member will validate your identification on our computer system
3. Our Attendants will only release the child to the parents/guardians on their membership or an authorized individual (must be given permission prior to pick up)

ARTICLE III: CAMP

Section 1. Camp Environment

YMCA Camp programming takes place at a variety of locations.

Seasonal Camps and School Day Out camps take place at the Foothills Area YMCA Cottingham Campus (370 Memorial Drive, Seneca SC, 29672).

Summer Camp and Counselor in Training programming takes place at South Cove County Park (1099 S. Cove Road, Seneca SC, 29672) and **PUT WALHALLA LOCATION HERE.**

Ages

Children ages 4-12 years of age can register for camp. Teens ages 13-15 years of age can register for the Counselor in Training program.

Section 2. Hours of Operation, Weather, and Holidays

The After School Care program operates Monday through Friday from 2:30pm - 5:30pm. We work in partnership with our school locations, meaning there may be times when we close programming in alignment with the decision of the school. This typically occurs whenever there is an immediate concern for the staff and children in the program. In these cases, the YMCA will make every effort to communicate this information with as much notice as possible.

Times

Camp drop-off is from 7:30am until 9:00am. Camp pick-up is from 4:00pm until 5:30pm. If you plan to drop off later than 9:00am or pick up earlier than 4:00pm, please notify Camp Staff as soon as possible.

Late Pick-Up Policy

If your camper is picked up later than 5:30pm, a \$1.00 per minute charge will be applied to your account and immediately charged. Campers will be removed from the program after four instances of late pick-up. We realize emergencies may occur and cannot be avoided at times, so that is why we allow for three late pick ups before you risk losing your child(ren)'s

participation in our program. You must always have someone on the authorized pick up list who can pick your child(ren) up in the case of an emergency.

Section 3. What to Bring / What Not to Bring

Each day, please bring a bag containing the following (with all items and bag labeled with the child's name):

1. Refillable water bottle
2. Sunscreen - please send SPRAY sunscreen
3. Swimsuit and Towel - We will swim most days. A plastic shopping bag is great to put wet clothes in afterwards.
4. Lunch, if attending a seasonal or school day out camp. Lunch is provided at Summer Camp.
5. Afternoon snacks
6. Closed toe shoes

Please do not bring:

1. Valuables
2. Electronics
3. Toys
4. Playing cards
5. Weapons
6. Any items that one would not want shared

The YMCA is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items.

Section 4. Summer Camp Sign In and Sign Out Process

Sign In

When campers are dropped off, camp staff will sign them into the program on the Procure app or on the paper roster provided.

Sign Out

Each parent/guardian will be given a car tag with their camper's last name. This tag must be displayed on your dashboard or rearview mirror when entering the pick up line. The tags MUST be seen at pick up. Each child MUST be signed out daily and the time of departure will be recorded.

- Be prepared to provide your photo identification if necessary. Only authorized persons listed on your child's registration form may sign a child out.
- Authorized pick ups will scan the QR code at pickup for Procure to sign the child out (entering their own unique pin and creating a signature) or on the paper roster provided.

Section 5. Seasonal/School Day Out Camp Sign In and Sign Out Process (at the Cottingham Campus)

Sign In

When campers are dropped off, camp staff will sign them into the program on the Procure app or on the paper roster provided.

Sign Out

Each child MUST be signed out daily and the time of departure will be recorded.

- Be prepared to provide your photo identification if necessary. Only authorized persons listed on your child's registration form may sign a child out.
- Authorized pick ups will scan the QR code at pickup for Procure to sign the child out (entering their own unique pin and creating a signature) or on the paper roster provided.

Section 6. Late Pick Up Policy

All Camp programming ends at 5:30pm. However, staff will not leave a child unattended. There will be an immediate \$1.00/minute charge for every minute after 5:30pm. If you know you will be late, please make alternate pick up arrangements. The YMCA Camp staff should be notified if you foresee late pick up. If a child is picked up late from our program four times, they will be removed from the program.

Section 7. Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks

Summer Camp

Breakfast and lunch will be provided each day by the Summer Feeding program. Menus will be released each week, but may change at any time due to changes in supplies. All food items will be peanut free, but may include gluten, eggs, and dairy. Campers are welcome to bring their own lunch from home. We will not be able to refrigerate or microwave lunches, so please keep this in mind when preparing meals.

While we will have a designated snack time each afternoon, we will not provide snacks. Please pack your camper a snack daily. There will be special days where we will have afternoon treats for sale, including Tikiz Ice. These days will be listed in the weekly newsletter.

All Other Camps

Breakfast, lunch, and snacks will NOT be provided. Please pack your camper a lunch and snack daily as well as breakfast, unless they will eat before arriving at camp.

We are a nut free camp! Please do not pack any items containing nuts. In order to maintain the safety of all our campers, any items that contain nuts will not be able to be opened under any circumstances.

Section 8. Swimming

During camp, there will be swim times for campers either at our Cottingham Campus pools, the Walhalla City Pool, or in the lake at South Cove County Park. Please note that other camp activities could either limit or extend these times. Campers are required to wear a life vest if swimming in the lake at South Cove regardless of swimming ability.

Water safety is of utmost importance at camp. Upon arrival at the pool for the first time during camp, every camper will be swim tested to guarantee that they are safe in the water. The structure of this swim test is detailed below and it will be important to make your camper aware of this process prior to attending camp. You may request for your camper to not take the swim test. If no swim test is taken, the camper will be required to wear a life vest. If a camper does not pass the swim test they will be required to wear a life vest. These life vests will be provided on site. If you would like to send your camper with their own life vest, it must be PFD Coast Guard approved. Every camper that passes the swim test will receive a colored band to wear, signifying that they have taken and passed the test. Their name will also be recorded on the swim test log for future reference.

Here is a bulleted list of some other important information regarding water safety:

- Campers are allowed to bring their own goggles and swim caps
- Campers are **NOT** allowed to bring any other pool toys, noodles, etc. Inflatables are not allowed at any time.
- While in the water, campers are not permitted to hang on staff members or other campers. They are to keep their hands and feet to themselves. If a camper violates this rule, endangering the safety of themselves or others, they will be removed from the water for a timeout or the remainder of the swim time if behavior persists.
- Campers are not permitted to run on the pool deck at any time
- Lifeguards will be on duty during swim times at the Cottingham Campus pools and Walhalla City Pool. Lifeguards are not guaranteed to be present while swimming at the lake.

The Swim Test

Participants must complete the following to pass a swim test:

1. Jump into the pool at the transition line, resurface, and begin swimming
2. Swim to the deep end "T" using a forward crawl stroke in a horizontal position, without stopping or touching the bottom
3. Tread water for 60 seconds
4. Exit the pool without assistance, using the wall

Section 9. Field Trips and Transportation

Field trips may take place throughout camp. On these days, campers **MUST** arrive at camp by 9:00am so that everyone can be checked in and ready when the buses arrive. We will make efforts to be back at camp by 3:30pm on these days, but please be aware that this may not always be the case as there are many factors that play into travel times. **Campers**

must wear their camp T-Shirt on field trip days if attending Summer Camp. You will be notified of any field trips in newsletters and email communications.

YMCA authorized vehicles will transport campers to and from the pools as well as to and from field trips. These vehicles will only be driven by staff 21 years of age or older that have a safe driving record and are properly trained in the use of the vehicle. SDOC activity buses may be used for longer trips. If campers are unable to maintain the rules of the vehicle, they will not be permitted to attend field trips.

ARTICLE IV: AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Section 1. After School Care Environment

The After School Care program takes place at elementary schools across the School District of Oconee County. Programming will be able to utilize different areas of each elementary school (as determined by the Principal at each school). For example, the programming might take place in/at: cafeterias, gyms, playgrounds, classrooms, etc. We also provide a snack to all children during the After School program.

Section 2. Hours of Operation, Weather, and Holidays

The After School Care program operates Monday through Friday from 2:30pm - 5:30pm. We work in partnership with our school locations, meaning there may be times when we close programming in alignment with the decision of the school. This typically occurs whenever there is an immediate concern for the staff and children in the program. In these cases, the YMCA will make every effort to communicate this information with as much notice as possible.

Additionally, in the case of an unexpected closure, the YMCA will not be responsible for refunds. The Childcare Director and Branch Executives/CEO of the YMCA will reserve the right to make any changes to this policy per the situation. In the event of severe weather, closing will be posted via TV broadcastings, media websites, and YMCA social media. Tuition remains the same, regardless if the program closes for any unforeseen circumstances (ex: weather, power outager).

The After School Care program follows the school district calendar and will operate on all full days of school. The YMCA will not hold After School Care programming on half days/early dismissal days.

Section 3. What to Bring / What Not to Bring

Listed below are items your child will need for the After School program (please label all items with your child's name)

1. Appropriate clothing: due to high levels of activity, comfortable tennis shoes/sneakers are highly recommended. In the winter season, please bring coats for playground play.
2. School supplies: children needing to complete homework while at the After School program will need to bring the appropriate materials with them, including books.
3. A water bottle and snacks (if they do not want to eat the snack we will provide for them)

Listed below are items your child SHOULD NOT bring to After School Care:

1. Knives, weapons
2. Alcohol, drugs, tobacco products
3. Expensive jewelry
4. Toys
5. Electronics (tablets, phones, game systems)
6. Make up
7. Playing cards, Pokemon cards, baseball cards, etc.

Staff will collect these items and they will be returned to the parent/guardian.

The YMCA is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items.

Section 4. Sign In and Sign Out Process

Sign In

1. When children arrive at the After School Program, they will be signed into our Child Care App, Procure or on the paper roster provided. Parents will receive notification that their child has been signed into the program through the app.

Sign Out

1. Each child MUST be signed out daily and the time of departure is recorded
2. Be prepared to provide photo identification if necessary.
3. Only authorized persons listed on your child's registration form may sign a child out
4. Authorized pick ups will scan the QR code at pickup for Procure to sign the child out (entering their own unique pin and creating a signature) or on the paper roster provided.

Late Pick Up Policy

The After School program ends at 5:30pm. However, staff will not leave a child unattended. There will be an immediate \$1.00/minute charge for every minute after 5:30pm. If you know you will be late, please make alternate pick up arrangements. The YMCA After School staff should be notified if you foresee late pick up. If a child is picked up late from our program four times, they will be removed from the program.

ARTICLE V: PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians are asked to remember that we are child centered programs. Our children are easily influenced by our language and actions. The YMCA challenges staff and participants to accept and demonstrate our four core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. If a dispute arises, we ask that you move the discussion in a private area. At no time should any disputes be carried out in front of the children or other parents/guardians. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding threats of any type or rude, aggressive behaviors. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow the expectations in this handbook may result in expulsion from YMCA programs.

It is our priority to make sure all parents/guardians are informed of what is going on in our programs. The YMCA will make every effort to communicate with you about activities, special events, behavior, etc. Communication will be sent through: newsletters, social media, signs posted at pick-up, Procure, phone calls, in person communication and emails. It is required that parents/guardians provide an email address so you can receive important updates. If there is ever a time you want to know more, please contact the Childcare Director or a member of our leadership staff.

- Parents/Guardians must follow all established policies and procedures outlined in this handbook, including pick-up policies, late pick-up policies, late payment policies, etc.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for reading all emails, newsletters, Procure messages, flyers, etc. regarding our programming as well as regularly reviewing the YMCA website, social media pages, and materials available at your child care program to keep well-informed.
- Parents/Guardians will read the Childcare Behavior Contract upon registering for a program and review it with their child regularly.

Section 2. Registration and Payment

- A. Parents/Guardians may enroll their children in our childcare programs depending on the availability of the program. Children will be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis, regardless of nationality, race, gender or creed. To enroll:
 - a. Register online at www.faymca.org or come to our facility to register at the front desk
 - b. When registering, you will complete the enrollment packet (includes emergency contact information, authorized pick up list, health history information, signing of the Childcare Behavior Contract, etc.)
 - c. At the time of registration, the registration fee is due. You will also schedule all future payments.
 - i. *Please note that if you have any outstanding payments with the Foothills Area YMCA for any program area, these payments must be paid in full before your child is allowed to begin childcare.*

- B. The FAYMCA reserves the right to deny child care services if one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - a. The child is not participating in or benefiting from the program
 - b. The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care for the child
 - c. The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care to other enrolled children due to the behaviors of the child
 - d. If a child is being picked up from the program after 5:30pm on a recurring basis.
- C. The YMCA has scholarships available to help reduce tuition. If interested in applying for assistance, please visit our website and complete the Financial Assistance application.
- D. If you and your child(ren) are current members of the Foothills Area YMCA, you will receive the membership rate for our child care programs. If, at any point throughout the program time, you terminate your membership, you will no longer receive the membership rate for your child care payments.

After School Care

- A. Credit or debit card drafts occur weekly, 3 days prior to the next enrolled week of After School Care (usually happens on Friday mornings).
- B. In the event of nonpayment, a \$10.00 late fee will be applied to the account one day after the payment was due.
- C. Failure to pay two consecutive drafts will withdraw the child(ren) from the program.
- D. Any changes to your credit/debit card must be made prior to the weekly draft.

E. Holding Fees

- a. If you are registered for a week of child care and your child(ren) will not attend, you must pay a holding fee of 50% of your weekly child care rate to keep your spot in the program. To do so, notice of a child's absence for an upcoming week must be given to the Childcare Director before the weekly draft. The 50% holding fee will also apply in cases where the child will not be attending the program for a period, over multiple weeks or months, but the family is interested in holding their child's spot in our child care program.
- F. Registration fees and session payments are non-refundable and cannot be moved to another week's tuition payment.
- G. The full rate will be required for payment regardless of the number of days children attend.
- H. A two week notice must be given to fully withdraw your child(ren) from the After School program.
- I. We cannot accept payments at After School Care sites.

Camp

- A. For Summer Camp, at the time of registration, a \$25.00/week deposit is required to reserve each week. The deposit will be applied to the total cost of camp for the week.

- B. Credit or debit card drafts occur weekly, one week prior to the next enrolled week of camp (usually happens on Mondays).
- C. In the event of nonpayment, a \$10.00 late fee will be applied to the account one day after the payment was due.
- D. Weekly deposits, session payments, and registration fees are non-refundable and cannot be moved to another week's tuition payment.
- E. Failure to pay two consecutive drafts will withdraw the child(ren) from the program.
- F. If you need to unenroll your camper from any session, you must give a two week notice prior to the session so your camper will be removed and you will not be charged.
- G. The full rate will be required for payment regardless of the number of days children attend.
- H. We cannot accept payments at Summer Camp sites.

Section 3. Waitlist

The YMCA registers families for our child care programs on a first come first serve basis. Many of our programs are in high demand and fill up quickly. If spots are not currently available in a program, your child can be added to the waitlist. Knowing child care is important for families, we work diligently to help move children off the waitlists when possible. The YMCA moves children off the waitlist in the order of when they were placed on the waitlist.

ARTICLE VI: CHILD CARE POLICIES

Section 1. Illnesses

Following the recommendations of the Center of Disease Control, participants who have a fever of 100.4 or above or other signs of illness will not be permitted to participate in programming. In order to return, they must be fever/symptom free for 24 hours.

The Foothills Area YMCA staff cannot provide care for sick children. If any child has a fever, is vomiting, or having severe pains, diarrhea, severe nasal or eye discharge, unidentified rash, or a contagious condition (RSV, flu, hand foot and mouth, chicken pox, measles, lice, ringworm, Covid, etc.), the parent/guardian will be asked to pick up their child immediately. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the Childcare Director as soon as possible. With any illness, a doctor's release may be requested prior to their return to programming.

Section 2. Medications

After School Care:

The FAYMCA prefers that all medication be administered at home before arrival. However, if it is necessary that medication be given while at After School Care, please communicate this with the school number. The FAYMCA staff will NOT administer medication to students in our After School program unless it is emergency medication (ex: epipen, inhaler, etc.). In order for us to keep emergency medications, the parent/guardian must complete the necessary

medication paperwork. Under NO circumstances are children allowed to administer their own medication.

Childwatch:

Only parents/guardians can administer medication to the children in our care. Childwatch staff can NOT administer medications to our participants; and the medications cannot be stored in our Childwatch program space.

Camps:

If your child will need medication administered to them during camp hours, medication paperwork must be completed prior to camp attendance. We must also have the original container listing the camper's name, the name of the medication, the correct dosage, the prescribing doctor's name, as well as the time of day that the medication should be administered.

Daily medications will be kept in the camp office and administered by Camp Coordinators. Any emergency specific medications (inhalers, epipens, etc.) will be carried by your camper's counselor throughout the day for quick access.

Medical Emergencies

Our staff are fully trained in First Aid and CPR and are ready to act quickly on any situation that arises. Basic first aid supplies will be available at all program sites, along with an AED and LifeVac device (for choking). For any serious injuries or illnesses that require additional medical attention, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If the situation requires advanced medical support, EMS will be contacted immediately.

Section 3. Injuries

Unfortunately, even with the best safety guidelines in place, accidents do happen. In the event your child is injured while in our programs, staff will notify you via call, email, or in person. They will present you with an Incident Form or "Ouch" Report to sign. The reports will provide you with a description of the incident and details on the time, date, description of the injury, and first aid administered.

Section 4. Participants with Special Needs

While the Foothills Area YMCA will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for participants with special needs, we cannot provide care for children who are: a danger to themselves, of danger to others, in need of a one-on-one ratio or anything more than normal ratios, or a disruption to the normal activities. A parent/guardian must discuss special conditions or circumstances involving their child with the Childcare Director prior to enrollment so that the administration may determine if reasonable accommodations can be made for your child.

Section 5. Helpful Information

Children's actions and behavior often reflect situations that are experienced at home (ex: death of a pet, parents divorcing, fighting with siblings, etc.). If such disruptive or traumatic experiences should occur, please inform the Childcare Director or Direct Care Staff. This will enable us to better meet the needs of your child. All information will be kept confidential.

ARTICLE VII: CHILD SAFETY

Section 1. Youth Consumer Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Youth outlines specific expectations of youth.

Abuse or Mistreatment

The YMCA's top priority is keeping youth safe. Any form of abuse or mistreatment of youth, employees, and volunteers is prohibited. Youth shall not abuse or mistreat employees, volunteers, or other youth in any way. Use of abusive, obscene or profane language, including racial, religious, gender, or sexual references directed at other people will not be tolerated.

Youth shall not engage in verbal or emotional abuse or mistreatment of other youth, employees, or volunteers.

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate jokes• Encouragement• Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name-calling• Bullying or Hazing• Ridicule or Humiliation• Discussing Sexual Behaviors• Cursing• Sexual Jokes• Shaming or Belittling• Derogatory remarks• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate other youth• Derogatory remarks about another youth or their family• Comments relating to physique or body development• Inappropriate games like <i>Truth or Dare</i> and <i>Never Have I Ever</i>

Youth shall not engage in the physical abuse or mistreatment of other youth, employees, or volunteers.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Side hugs ● Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs ● Pats on the shoulder or back ● Handshakes ● High-fives and fist bumps ● Pats on the head when culturally appropriate ● Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ● Arms around shoulders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full-frontal hugs ● Kisses ● Showing affection in isolated areas ● Lap sitting ● Wrestling or Piggyback rides ● Tickling ● Exposing private parts of the body ● Any type of massage given by or to a youth ● Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer ● Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas ● Hitting, Spanking, Shaking or Slapping ● Unnecessary restraints ● Viewing or showing others pornographic materials

Personal Relationships

Appropriate personal relationships between youth are encouraged. However, the YMCA strongly discourages romantic relationships between youth while in programming. Youth are not permitted to hold hands, sit on others’ laps, use full-frontal hugs, or kiss other youth while in programming.

One-on-one Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth, or when a youth is alone with another youth. The YMCA aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the YMCA administration. If you observe one-on-one interactions between employees and youth, you should report this to the program director or call/email a Child Protection Committee member at 864-280-7658 or abuseconcerns@faymca.org. You can also call an anonymous helpline at 855-347-0751.

Electronic Communication

The Y takes very seriously its obligation to protect children. Y staff should not have contact or communication with minors (under age 18) who participate in Y programs outside of Y work time. With today’s electronic communication options (e-mail, text messages, blogging, social networking sites) it is more important than ever that all employees understand the Y’s policy on such contact or communication in order to protect youth and staff.

For purposes of this policy a “youth” is anyone under eighteen (18) years of age who participates in YMCA programs or whom a YMCA employee has met through YMCA programs.

a. Communication Guidelines

1. Employees should not initiate personal phone calls with or receive personal phone calls from youth. A call is considered “personal” if it does not involve both a Y phone and Y specific subject matter. When employees receive calls from youth and/or regarding a non-Y subject, this must be immediately reported to a supervisor.

2. Text messaging with youth is not permitted. If an employee receives a text message from a youth, a supervisor must immediately be made aware.
3. Employees must not share any personal email addresses or instant message names or nicknames with youth. Employees should not initiate or respond to e-mail or instant messages from youth while using any personal (non-Y) connection to the internet.
4. Use of social networking sites to communicate with youth is only permitted if done through a Y- sponsored or approved site. No personal blog or social networking site should be used. Any website or blog maintained by an employee should not have pictures or make reference to any youth, and employees should not request or accept to be linked as "friends" or connections with youth in social networking sites.
5. Communication between employees and youth should only be through YMCA e-mail accounts and phones, any such communication with youth should be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor.

Youth will comply with the YMCA's policies governing the use of cell phones. Youth are not permitted to access or share cell phones with other youth while in programming.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

Possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and tobacco products (including e-cigarettes/vapes) while at the YMCA or while engaged in the YMCA's programming is strictly prohibited. Youth will not be permitted to participate in any program while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or illicit substances. Possession of these substances will result in confiscation and/or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Weapons

We want the YMCA to be a safe place for employees, volunteers, and youth. Weapons and items that may be considered weapons are prohibited. This includes laser pointers. Possession of these items will result in confiscation and/or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians, and/or the authorities will be notified as appropriate.

Violence

The YMCA seeks to provide a safe environment for youth, employees, and volunteers in our community. Violence and threats of violence including but not limited to destruction of property, bullying, physical fighting, and assault, will not be tolerated at the YMCA, on our grounds, in organization facilities, in other facilities being utilized by the YMCA, or during YMCA sponsored activities and events. Employees are available to assist in the resolution of differences. Engaging in violence will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Disruptive Behavior

We take pride in the appearance of the YMCA, and we always want to ensure youth are safe. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior is not permitted in the YMCA. This includes, but is not limited to, graffiti, littering, spitting, or throwing objects that could intentionally or unintentionally harm others or cause disorder. Engaging in disruptive behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Bullying

The YMCA will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms including:

1. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
2. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful name.
3. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
4. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
 1. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 2. Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 3. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
 4. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
 5. Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
 6. Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, exposing private body parts, creating or sharing images or videos involving private body parts or sexualized material (including artificially generated materials), and utilizing sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This applies to all youth, employees, and volunteers. Engaging or participating in bullying will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Reporting

Because the YMCA is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including youth, actively participate in creating a safe environment. If any employee, volunteer, or youth observes suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations by an employee, volunteer, or other youth, that person must report their observations. Remember, at the YMCA, the policies apply to everyone. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated in the manner described in this policy.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth

Violation of this policy or any abuse prevention policies outlined by the YMCA
Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youth(s)
Privately communicating with youth(s) via electronic communication or social media
Buying gifts for individual youth(s) or their parents
Making suggestive comments to youth(s)
Picking favorite youth

Youth are encouraged to report concerns or complaints about employees, volunteers, or other youth to a Child Protection Committee Member who can be reached at 864-280-7658 or the anonymous helpline at 855-347-0751.

Section 2. Policy Prohibiting the Abuse or Mistreatment of One Youth by Another Youth

The Foothills Area YMCA has zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among youth within the YMCA. The YMCA is committed to providing all youth with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. Conduct by youth that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, the YMCA will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, the YMCA will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

Section 3. Procedure for Parent/Guardians and Youth to Report Concerns

The YMCA believes youth, and parents/guardians have valuable thoughts and insights to share regarding our operations. Accordingly, the YMCA encourages youth and parents/guardians to share opinions, suggestions, concerns, and/or questions about our policies, personnel, and/or other matters impacting the YMCA.

In general, the best person to initially bring opinions, suggestions, concerns, and/or questions to is the program Director. However, to the extent the concerns relate to the program Director, or to the extent a youth or parent/guardian believes the program Director did not fully address a matter, youth and parents/guardians may direct their opinions, suggestions, concerns, and/or questions to the next level of management or directly to Executive Branch Leadership.

To remedy concerns that appear to have been ignored or unresolved after initial reporting, utilize this formal procedure to report concerns. This procedure provides for a timely, thorough and objective investigation of the following concerns:

- _____ Inappropriate or suspicious behavior by employee(s)/volunteer(s);
- _____ Inappropriate or suspicious behavior by youth;
- _____ Inappropriate or suspicious behavior by a youth's parent/guardian in program
- _____ Retaliation; and/or;
- _____ Whistleblower complaints.

Written Complaint Required for Formal Process

Verbal concerns are encouraged, particularly for issues that may be easily and expeditiously resolved, but a written complaint is required to initiate this formal concern process.

To ensure a timely and effective response, concerns should include the following information to the extent possible:

- 1) The name(s) of individuals(s) involved;
- 2) The date(s) the behavior occurred;

- 3) The name(s) of any known witness(es);
- 4) A summary of the conduct meriting the concern including:
 - a. The behavior complained of and/or the alleged policy or legal violation(s);
 - b. Direct quotes when relevant and available; and
 - c. Any relevant documentation.
- 5) The remedy sought by the youth or parent/guardian sharing the concern.

Anonymous Reporting

Should you wish to make an anonymous report, please call the Praesidium hotline at 855-347-0751. Your report will be collected by a Praesidium representative and then reported to the Foothills Area YMCA, completely anonymously.

Timeline

Youth or parents/guardians who themselves have a concern or who are aware of behavior meriting a complaint, must provide the above-described written concern via email to the program Director within 5-10 business days. The program Director will meet with the youth or parent/guardian to hear their concern and attempt to resolve the complaint within 10-15 business days.

Following that meeting, the program Director will provide a brief written response to the youth or parent/guardian who brought the concern no later than 10-15 business days that includes brief written findings on the issues raised and relief sought.

If the youth or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the written response, the individual who brought the concern may submit an appeal to a Branch Executive no later than 10-15 business days. The Branch Executive will meet with the youth or parent/guardian to hear their concern and attempt to resolve the complaint within 10-15 business days.

Following that meeting, the Branch Executive will provide a written response to the youth or parent/guardian who brought the concern no later than 10-15 business days that includes brief written findings on the issues raised and relief sought.

The CEO is the final arbiter of reported concerns at the YMCA.

Investigation

The program Director, Branch Executives and/or the CEO will thoroughly investigate the issues raised in the concern and will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved to the extent possible by law. All parties must cooperate with the investigation.

If the YMCA determines a violation of policy or law has occurred, the YMCA will take appropriate action, up to and including termination and notification of external authorities.

Retaliation

The YMCA strictly prohibits retaliation against youth and/or parents/guardians for reporting, filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing conducted by the YMCA or a federal or state law enforcement agency or court.

Youth and/or parents/guardians should report any suspected retaliation to the program Director, Branch Executives, and/or CEO immediately after becoming aware of it. Any report

of retaliatory conduct will be objectively, timely and thoroughly investigated. If a report of retaliation is found to be valid, the YMCA will take appropriate remedial action, up to and including discharging the individual(s) responsible. The YMCA will not retaliate against any youth or parent/guardian for raising a concern and will not knowingly permit retaliation by management or other employees.

Publication and Communication to Youth and Parents/Guardians

This Procedure for Youth and Parents/Guardians to Report Concerns must be shared with all youth and parents/guardians annually and must be included in any organization handbook or manual. Any changes to this policy will be communicated in writing to youth and parents/guardians via email on file.

Section 4. Babysitting and Outside Contact

The Foothills Area YMCA does **NOT** permit employees to provide babysitting or other services to families or children they meet in YMCA programs. In addition, our staff cannot provide transportation in a personal vehicle or be in contact with children outside of YMCA programs. This includes non-program related emails, texting, phone calls, letters, and contact over the internet. Such policies are designed to protect children and staff from child abuse and/or false allegations. Parents/Guardians are asked to report any violation of this policy to YMCA management.

Section 5. Bathrooms and Changing

YMCA staff members are not permitted to accompany a child one-on-one for bathroom usage. YMCA staff members are also not permitted to change diapers for participants. If your child needs a diaper change, you will be contacted to do so.

Participants in our After School Care and Camp programming are expected to be able to use the restroom and change their clothes independently. This is only adjusted when a further conversation with the program leadership has taken place and other support/systems have been agreed to and established. In serving the school age group, the YMCA recognizes the importance of the child's privacy and therefore staff are only expected to support the child in very rare occasions for something minimal (ex: helping to button pants once the child has made multiple efforts to do so independently with failure).

Section 6. Ratios

Child Care ratios are set to ensure the utmost safety of our program participants. For the purposes of our programs, infants are defined as those ages 6 weeks to 18 months. Toddlers are children ages 18 months to 2 years old. Whenever possible, infants should be separated from mobile toddlers and preschoolers to ensure their safety.

- A. Foothills Area YMCA child to staff ratios are as follows:
 - a. Birth to one year: 1 staff person to 4 children
 - b. One year to two years: 1 staff person to 4 children
 - c. Two to three years: 1 staff person to 8 children
 - d. Three years to four years: 1 staff person to 10 children
 - e. Four years to five years: 1 staff person to 12 children
 - f. Five years to twelve years: 1 staff to 15 children

B. Maximum Capacities

- a. Childwatch areas should be bright, clean, safe, well-equipped and spacious enough for staff to adequately care for the maximum number of children allowed in the room. Maximum occupancies are set based on space and local codes as well as our ratio guidelines.
- b. When our Childwatch areas meet maximum capacity, our staff will let you know that we can no longer admit any more children at that particular time. However, a waitlist will be started. As space becomes available, an associate will locate the next family on the waitlist to permit their children into Childwatch.

ARTICLE VIII: BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Section 1. YMCA Child Care Rules

1. Show respect for yourself and others
2. Speak for yourself, not anyone else
3. Use put ups, not put-downs
4. Listen to the staff members and your peers
5. Play safely and fairly
6. Keep hands/feet to yourself
7. Follow all facility and pool rules

To sum it up, "Be Safe, Be Neat, Be Kind"!

Section 2. Discipline Policy

The use of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at the Foothills Area YMCA. We utilize and encourage the practice of praise and positive reinforcement as effective methods of behavior management. We believe that when children receive positive and understanding interactions, they can develop good self-concept, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. While this is our first avenue of behavior management, there are cases when these techniques do not prove effective and additional steps are required to resolve behavior infractions. Please note that we understand that children make mistakes and we allow for that in our write up structure. The number one goal of our discipline policy is to keep all students in our program safe. Please review our policies below so as to fully understand the system we use for behavior infractions.

1. Initially, children will be given quiet reprimand/verbal warning. This warning is undocumented and is often given by the child care staff.
2. If behavior persists after verbal warning, a warning write up will be written for the child. Parents/guardians will be contacted via phone, email, or in-person communication that day to explain the incident and describe the steps that were taken to resolve the issue. Parents/guardians are requested to sign the behavior write up as acknowledgement of communication regarding the issue. We also advise parents to reinforce any behavior modifications at home so that the child can be successful in our programs.

3. If behavior persists after the warning write up, there will be an official Write Up 1 completed with the child behavior plan filled out. The child behavior plan will be implemented to identify specific behaviors and work with children and parents/guardians to develop appropriate behavior management solutions.
4. If behavior persists after implementation of the child behavior plan, the child will receive an official Write Up 2, which will result in suspension depending on violation.
5. If behavior persists still, an official Write Up 3 will be presented and the child will be removed from the program.
6. For severe offences, such as but not limited to fighting/hitting, theft, vandalism, bullying, possession of weapons or drugs, severe verbal threats, sexual misconduct, running away from child care premises, blatant disruption of activities, or any other behaviors that endanger the safety of self or others, the child may be suspended or dismissed from the program immediately. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up immediately following this type of infraction.
7. Students will NOT be disciplined at the Foothills Area YMCA child care programs for behaviors that occurred outside of program hours, even at parental request.