BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF MERCER COUNTY

After School Program Handbook
2019-2020 School Year

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After School Program Handbook

This handbook is intended to provide information to Parents of the After School Program members about club operations and policies. It is not a contract between parents and the Club, and is subject to revision at any time, without prior notice.

Mission

To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.

Enrollment

All children must be members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County in order to enroll in the after school program. Membership dues are $30 per year. This membership also allows you to take advantage of other Club programs.

Parents/guardians must complete the entire enrollment package before your child may start the after school program. Enrollment package may be found online at www.bgcmercer.org .

Ages

The after school program is open to children in Kindergarten through middle school *(must be potty trained)*.

Curriculum

Students in grades K-8 will have the opportunity to participate in activities that will include homework assistance *(Power Hour)*, art instruction, STEM activities, music, theater, sports, cooking, and special interest clubs.

The after school curriculum rotates in 12 week program cycles (Fall, Winter, Spring) during the school year.

Nutritional snacks are served daily.

Professional staff will lead activities with 20-25 students per group, with a teacher assistant to keep a 15:1 student to teacher ratio. All teachers will have state certification and/or years of experience in the theme activity they are leading

Monthly Tuition

Tuition is based on a sliding scale and is due every 1st of the month. Late fees will be assessed on all payments received after the 5th of the month. We encourage all parents to use our auto-deduct credit card tuition program or to a sign up for an account to pay online. This eliminates fees and provides for a smooth payment process.

Late Policy Payment

A late fee of $25 will be charged if payment is not received by the 5th of each month. Parents/Guardians delinquent in payment will be informed by the program staff not to return to program until all late fees have been paid.

A $35.00 fee will be charged for checks returned for insufficient funds. If more than one check is returned for insufficient funds, only Credit/Debit Cards, Money Orders or Cash will be accepted as payment.

Tuition Assistance

The Club works extremely hard each year raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to enable everyone to take advantage of our programs and services. Please complete a sliding fee scholarship application if you need assistance in paying for the after school program. Your fee would then be based on the number of children you are registering and

income level. Many parent/guardians also get funding help from the Division of Youth and Family Services, Social Services and/or Child Care Connection.

Let us know how we can help you.

Transportation
The Club will provide free daily transportation from a number of schools in the Trenton/Ewing/Lawrence to it's Centre Street and Spruce Street locations. Call the Club for specific bus routes and schools. The Club's transportation works like a city bus. Your child must be ready and waiting at the designated bus stop ready for pick up.

Please remember, transportation to the program by van/bus is a privilege. Remind your child that good van/bus behavior is a matter of safety. Children are expected to display appropriate behavior on the bus at all times. Any reported problems will be handled according to our discipline code *(See Member Code of Conduct for additional information)*.

Program Hours
At school based locations, the program operates from school dismissal to 6:15 pm and our Centre Street and Spruce Street locations, the program runs from pick-up at the school until 6:30 p.m. Monday – Friday unless otherwise indicated.

Half Days
The after school program will run on half days at the Centre Street and Spruce Street locations. It may or may not be open on half days at school based sites. Please speak with the after school program site director for details.

School Holidays and Holiday Camp
The Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County will provide a Holiday Camp program for parents during a number of school holidays.

In order to participate in Holiday Camp, you will need to complete a separate registration form which is available online and submit it by the deadline for each Holiday Camp offering. Your regular afterschool tuition must be current in order to register for Holiday Camp.

Register early, space is limited.

Inclement Weather
The Club will make decisions based on the weather if after school program will be cancelled. We follow the Trenton and Lawrence Township School District on closings, delays, etc.

In the event of inclement weather after the children arrive at the after school program, the program may have an early closing. Parents will be notified by text/email/phone if the program will be cancelled or close early. If closing early, parents are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible.

It is therefore extremely important that we have all current, working numbers for all parent/guardians and emergency contacts.

Late Pick-up Policy

All children must be picked up by 6:30 pm at our Centre Street and Spruce Street locations and by 6:15 pm at the school based location. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the program staff if pick up will be after the program ends.

A late fee of $1.00 per minute and per child will be charged after the program closes. *(Even in the event that a phone call is received, a late fee may be assessed.)* All late fee payments need to be paid the next business day by noon. If payment is not made the child will not be able to return to the program until all late fee payments are paid in full

If children are not picked up at the close of the program, program staff will call the listed emergency pick up person to come for the child(ren). The Department of Children and Families and/or the police will be contacted if we are unable to reach anyone to pick up the child(ren).

While occasional lateness is understandable, chronic lateness and/or failure to pay the late fee charge will result in dismissal from the program.

Snacks

We provide children with a nutritious snack each afternoon between 3:00 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. depending on the daily activity. You are welcome to supplement or substitute this snack with one of your own. Children will only be able to eat during the snack periods.

Parents may send a peanut/nut free nutritious snack to the program with their child.

You will be provided with the monthly snack menu.

All snacks should be peanut/nut free. We are a peanut/nut-free facility. Do not bring any food products into the building that contains nuts for the safety of our Club members.

Birthdays & Celebrations

We are sure that you are aware that many children in today's world face health issues concerning food. Many of our members deal with serious food-related problems that can require emergency procedures.

The health, safety and well-being of the children are always our first concern. **Therefore, we adopted a no food policy for birthdays and we are a peanut/nut free facility.**

Arrival & Dismissal/Sign- in & Sign-out Policy

Members should not arrive at the Club earlier than 8:00 a.m. for Holiday Camp and 2:45 p.m. for the after school program. Supervision is not provided prior to that time. Please arrive and dismiss through the designated exits.

Children must be signed in *(when required)* and out every day by a parent or guardian 18 years of age or older. Please make sure you come inside the building every day to sign your child in *(when required)* and out.

If dropping off your child to the after school program, please be sure to walk your child into the building and to the appropriate program staff members so we can make sure that we are aware your child has arrived and is accounted for.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF MERCER COUNTY

After School Program Handbook

A child will not be released to anyone other than a parent /guardian or the person designated on the membership form. If your child is being picked up by someone other than yourself or your designee, you must provide a written, signed and dated note of authorization. The person picking up your child must provide picture identification and is required to sign your child out of the program**.**

A child will not be released without written authorization.

Release of Children

Once a child arrives at the building, he or she will not be permitted to leave for any reason. Children will only be released to a parent/guardian or authorized person.

Children are not permitted to walk home from the after school program.

Attendance & Absences

When your child is absent from the after school program, please call the main office of each location to report the absence or send an email. The numbers are:

- Centre Street Location: (609) 392-3191
- Spruce Street Location: (609) 695-6060

When leaving a message, please indicate the following:

● Your Child's Name
● Date
● Staff Member
● Reason for Absence
● Expected Date of Return

*****If your child is running a fever or ill, please keep him/her home. Members should be fever free and vomit free for 24 hours before returning to the program.***

All members absent due to communicable disease must be readmitted to the Club through the Youth Program Director.

Discipline Code

At the Club, one of our primary goals is to provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for all of the children we serve. We recognize that one of our jobs is to help children learn appropriate ways to handle conflicts. We work on this as conflicts arise, helping the children find solutions. Our primary method of discipline is to keep kids active in well-structured programs and focus on and reward positive behavior.

Children enrolled in our after school program are expected to set and maintain standards of citizenship and courtesy.

Children are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is safe and courteous while enjoying their rights and privileges. Mutual respect for the rights of other members and adults and also respect for the rights of others' personal property will help provide a safe, orderly and civil environment for everyone.

A child's behavior which infringes on the rights of other members or on personal or Club property will not be tolerated. Children engaging in such behavior should expect consequences for such behavior.

We reserve the right to exclude any child from the program for a specified period of time or to terminate any child's enrollment if that child is found to be continuously disruptive to our program.

Verbal or physical harassment of members by other members violates individual rights and will not be tolerated.

Deliberate damage to another child's property or Club property will result in payment by parents/guardians for such damage. Taking property of another child or of the Club will be treated in a serious manner.

Each child is expected to respect and to understand the differences they see in other children's abilities, appearance, dress, etc.

The parents/guardians are included in this discipline process so children can see that both parents and staff reinforcing the policies while setting a limit. Parents/guardians will be notified verbally or in writing regarding disciplinary action taken by a program staff member, to better aid the child in improving and correcting their behavior.

Program staff shall provide each child with guidance that helps the child acquire positive self-concept and self-control. Behavior guidance used by each program staff member will be constructive, positive, and suited to the age of the child at all times.

The following rules and standards apply.

1. To prevent unacceptable behavior from occurring the staff will:
   - Model appropriate behavior.
   - Arrange the classroom environment to enhance the learning of acceptable behaviors.
   - Use descriptive phrase praise when appropriate occurs.

2. When unacceptable behavior occurs or is about to occur, program staff will use:
   a. redirection—substitute a positive activity for a negative one
   b. distraction –change the focus of the activity or behavior
   c. active listening to determine the underlying cause of the behavior
   d. Time-out/Thinking Chair *(separation from the group)* is used as a last resort, only when less intrusive methods has been tried and or behavior of the child is dangerous to himself and others.
      i. In the event a time out is used, the child will be separated from the group for a maximum of 5 minutes.
      ii. If the child cannot calm themselves down and be ready to join the group again they will be removed from the classroom and taken to the Youth Program Director.
      iii. If after the Youth Program Director is unable to calm down the child and resolve the matter, you will be called and given the opportunity to calm down your child.
      iv. Failure to calm down your child within a 5-10 minute period will result in you needing to pick up your child for the rest of the day.

Members, including parents/guardians, are expected to:

1. Members are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity and have a sense of purpose and fortitude.
2. Respect the rights and safety of others.
3. Show proper care for Club property and work to keep the Club neat & clean.
4. Respect and treat each other as they would like to be treated.
5. Respect others differences.

6. Members should dress appropriately.
7. Members should not bring weapons or other prohibited items into the Club.
8. Resolve conflict peacefully, ask for help from staff when needed and do not resort to violence.
9. Be polite, have fun, and smile.
10. Strive for their best and encourage others to do the same.
11. Adhere to classroom and bus rules/regulations;
12. Conduct themselves appropriately on any field trips.
13. Respect the rights and safety of others;
14. Respect Club property and the property of others;
15. Respect the authority of all program staff members of the Boys & Girls Club;
16. Adhere to classroom and bus rules/regulations;
17. Conduct themselves appropriately on any field trips.

Bus Rules:

- Sitting properly in the seat, with seat belts securely fastened.
- Respect the people on the bus and property.
- Eating is not permitted on the bus.
- Hands and feet remain inside the bus.

If a member does not conduct him/herself as deemed by the Boys & Girls Club staff and support staff *(i.e. bus drivers)* the following course of response can be taken for any inappropriate behavior:

- Verbal/written warning and a meeting with parent/guardian.
- Parent meeting with the Youth Program Director.
- Prohibited from attending field trips, special events or activities.
- Suspension from the after school program.
- Expulsion from the after school program.

Please note that these expectations apply to all parents/guardians when in the building. Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats by parents/guardians toward program staff will not be tolerated. This will result in immediate termination.

In addition, lack of cooperation by the parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences can result in termination from the program.

Our primary method of discipline is to keep kids active in well structured programs, focus on and reward positive behavior, and to catch problems while they are still small.

All attendees of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County are expected to set and maintain standards of citizenship and courtesy. Children are expected to:

If a child does not conduct him/herself as deemed by the Boys & Girls Club staff and support staff (i.e. bus drivers) the following course of response can be taken for any inappropriate behavior:

- Meeting with parents
- Suspension from bus riding
- Prohibited from attending field trips, special events or activities

- Suspension from the after school program
- Termination from the after school program

Homework

One hour will be dedicated to homework. On occasions teachers will give more than 1 hour of homework but homework may still need to be completed at home. We have a minimum of two staff working with each group throughout the day and assist with homework but we strongly recommend that parents or someone at home review the homework each night.

Dress Code

Children should address appropriately for the weather and activity. Children should not wear any revealing tops or shorts/skirts that are above the mid-thigh. If a child is sent inappropriately dressed, the parent/guardian will be called and must bring the child clothing that is deemed appropriate.

Please be advised the following articles of clothing are prohibited:

- Bandanas; hats; hoods; torn clothing or excessively long t-shirts
- Open toed shoes, sandals, or any loose fitting footwear. Members must have sneakers to participate in gym, sports-related, and outside activities.
- Any clothing featuring violence, profanity, or any offensive pictures or words.

Extra Change of Clothes

We request that you send in a complete change of clothes *(underwear, pants, shirt, socks, etc.).*

It is essential to health and safety standards that all children bring a change of clothes with them. There are many reasons that may require a child to change their clothing.

Accidents are certainly the most predominant reason. Children of ALL ages occasionally wait too long, have stomach problems or get too busy doing something to stop and use the restroom. Accidents can also be from spills or sitting in something and we want to be able to have that ability to allow your child to change their clothes.

Although we sometimes have extra clothing on hand, often we do not have correct sizes or find that the clothing is not being returned. Please be sure that your child(ren) have a change of undergarments as well as pants or shorts, a top and socks. Program staff is often finding one but not the other. We like to be discrete as possible with accidents which can often be difficult when a child has to wear something that does not fit them.

If we do not have the extra clothing to change your child, you will be called to come and change your child.

Personal Belongings

Children should not bring valuables *(money, games, cell phone, pagers, etc.)* or personal items such as toys, stuffed animals, etc. to the after school program except when there is a special event or request made by program staff.

Any clothing or articles sent separately *(umbrellas, coats, backpacks and lunch bags)* should have the child's name written or pinned to it.

All items left at the Club at the end of the day will be placed in our lost and found. The Boys & Girls Clubs will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Medicine

Medications will be administered by a designated program staff when physicians find it necessary for a child to have medicine during the day. Permission must be granted by parent/guardian and specific instructions must be obtained from the physician prescribing the medicine.

All prescription medicines must be in the original bottle. A signed consent form and prescription from the doctor must be on file. Your child will not be able to start the afterschool program if you have not completed this as well as supplying the program staff with the medicine.

1. Must be accompanied by a note from parent/guardian giving permission for the staff to give the medication.

2. Must have a note/order from a physician, dentist, and orthodontist (on form or letterhead) containing the following:
   a. Child's name
   b. Date
   c. Medication name
   d. Dosage
   e. Time to be given
   f. Diagnosis
   g. Side effects to be observed
   h. Length of time order is in effect.
   i. Physician's signature

3. Must be in its original container *(ask your pharmacist for a separate bottle for the Club)*. Over-the-counter items MUST be in original packaging.

4. A child may self-administer medication without supervision of the school nurse for asthma or other life-threatening illnesses with the permission of the doctor, program staff, parent and director.

"Life-threatening illness" has been defined as an illness or condition that requires an immediate response to specific symptoms that if left untreated may lead to potential loss of life such as, but not limited to, the use of any inhaler to treat an asthma attack or the use of an adrenaline injection to treat a potential anaphylactic reaction.

5. All medications whether prescribed or across the counter including Tylenol, Advil, Midol, Benadryl, cough medicine, etc., shall be administered by only the school nurse or school nurse substitute.

These regulations are for the protection and well-being of all the children. If you have any questions concerning these procedures, please contact the Youth Program Director.

Children are not permitted to carry prescription or non-prescription medication(s) in the Club unless permission has been granted to self-administer medication in accordance with The Self Administration of Medication Policy.

Children may be permitted to self-administer medication without the supervision of Club staff for asthma or other life-threatening illnesses when the parental and prescribing physician request for self-administration.

Illness

If a child has any of the following symptoms, the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified to pick up the child immediately:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher;
- Vomiting or diarrhea;
- Accident requiring medical attention or a change of clothes
- Contagious disease;
- Any other physical or emotional situation or trauma which requires parent intervention.

Your child should be fever free and from any other contagious diseases for 24 hours before returning to our program.

When accidents occur during the after school program, first aid will be given to the child by the program staff.

For serious injuries requiring immediate medical attention, Emergency Medical Technicians/Police Department will be called and the child will be taken to the hospital. Parents/Guardians will be called immediately. **It is therefore extremely important that we have all current, working numbers for all parent/guardians and emergency contacts**.

A program staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain at the hospital until a parent/guardian arrives.

Communicable Diseases

If a child contracts any communicable disease, please report it to us immediately. The child may not return to the program without a written doctor's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

If a child becomes ill during the program, first aid certified staff will use his/her professional judgment to determine if the student should remain at program or be sent home. **It is essential for the program to have the current working telephone number of each parent or guardian.**

If it is deemed necessary for the child to be sent home, a parent or guardian must pick up the child within one hour of being contacted by the Boys & Girls Clubs staff.

The Boys & Girls Clubs staff will not be responsible for providing any change of clothing for any child for any reason. A parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called to pick any child that requires a change of clothing.

Telephone Use/Cell Phone Usage

The Boys & Girls Clubs staff will only be permitted to use the phone in the case of an emergency and/or to contact a parent/guardian regarding a member.

The program staff will not be permitted to contact parents/guardians to bring such things as snacks, money, etc. Please bring or send your child with everything that s/he will need for the day.

If you need to contact a program staff member, call our main offices at (609) 392-3191 for Centre Street location and (609) 695-6060 for Spruce Street location.

Club members in the after school program are not permitted to use cell phones while at the club.

In case of emergency members should ask program staff for permission to use the phone.

Members who visit the club during drop in hours must keep their phone on vibrate while in the building.

- If a member using a cell phone, they will be asked them to put it away. If we see it again, we will confiscate the phone until the parent/guardian picks the child up.
- If the member rides the bus, the cell phone will be given to the Youth Program Coordinator/Director so the parent/guardian can come pick it up.

Policy Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with the Cell Phone Policy may result in confiscation of cell phone, disciplinary action, and possibly expulsion for members.

Lockers

At the Spruce Street location each child enrolled in the after school program will receive an assigned locker. Only Club locks can be put on lockers to ensure that we can access lockers in case of an emergency. These locks can be purchased at the front desk for $7 each.

Computer Use/Social Media

All members are required to abide by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County Acceptable Use Agreement. All computer hardware and software belong to the Club and the Club retains the right to access e-mail, files or other material maintained on a Club computer as it believes necessary. All members are expected to be on appropriate websites. Violations of the rules and code of the Acceptable Use Agreement will be dealt with seriously. Violators may lose computer privileges and may be subject to other disciplinary action.

Use of social media is not allowed in the after school program

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying or passive support for those acts. A safe environment is necessary for members to be able to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is conduct that disrupts both a member's ability to learn and the club's ability to educate its members. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture, written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication (phone, computer, etc.), that takes place on Club property, at any Club-sponsored function or on a school bus that is motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic, (race, color, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) and has the effect of harming a member or damaging the member's property, or placing a member in reasonable fear of harm or damage to his/her property; or is insulting or demeaning to any member to cause substantial disruption in, interference with, the orderly operation of the Club.

This policy will impose appropriate consequences and remedial actions in response to acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying and applies to all members, Club employees and volunteers.

Parent Information

Information and happenings can be found in our Club brochures, parent flyers, newsletters and on pour website and social media pages. These sources will contain information concerning weekly activities, upcoming events, special programs and other important notices. In addition a weekly email is sent out to the parents/guardians every Friday. This email will contain information concerning weekly activities, upcoming events, special programs and other important notices. Sometimes additional emails are sent out during the week to inform or remind parents/guardians of things happening, upcoming events, or other important information for you to be aware of.

Parents/guardians have the right to schedule a meeting with the Youth Program Director at any time. If there are any concerns that need to be discussed regarding your child, they should be brought to the immediate attention of the director.

When necessary, conferences can be scheduled with camp counselors. Parents/Guardians only have the right to obtain information regarding their child. If a problem exists with another member, a meeting will be scheduled with all necessary parties to resolve the problem.

Parking

Please be careful and slow down when you enter our street as there are children present. Also, please keep in mind when you enter our street it is a two way street all the way until the other parking lot. We need everyone to go slowly and respect the signs.

Please do not park along the curb at any time. People have been blocking buses from getting in an up close to drop off and pick up students.

Field Trips

During the course of the year, the after school program may take field trips to local attractions. These trips are a valuable part of our after school experience. The same rules of conduct required in the Club are enforced on these trips.

Extra care and caution on field trips are necessary because of the different environments. Parent/guardian will be informed of all field trips via email, apps, parent board, etc.

A completed permission slip and/or waiver is required for some field trips.

Recess

During the after school program, children at the Spruce Street location will receive some recess time in our new playground. Recess time is a part of the necessary requirement for keeping members physically fit. Children will go outside unless the weather is poor or due to a heat index advisory/warning.

Children should dress appropriately for outside recess. Members should have sneakers on.

Parents/guardians should not request their child stay inside during recess.

Emergency Evacuation

In case of an emergency or natural disaster where the building must be evacuated, children will be moved off site to a secure location. Please speak with your child's After School Director to get the address of their evacuation location.

Drills

The Club performs monthly emergency drills.

Procedures are outlined for each program staff member. For safety reasons, children are expected to follow the staff's instructions, exit the room in a single line, refrain from conversation, use assigned exits and report to the assigned outdoor area.

Custody/Court Orders

Safety and security is one of our top priorities for every member. As a result, we must make sure to have accurate information relating to parent/guardian custody.

We must be advised of all court orders and/or custody matters involving a child enrolled in the after school program. In the event that a legal document restricts or limits contact with a child enrolled in our program, this document must be furnished to the program.

If your child is living with one parent who has legal custody and the non-custodial parent is not permitted to contact the child at the Club, or remove the child from the Club, the Membership Office must be provided with custody papers and/or written evidence indicating the same.

If these papers are not provided, we cannot refuse access to the child by the non-custodial parent.

Any change in the custodial status must be reported to the Membership Office.

Should the stipulations or conditions of any legally binding document change, we must receive a copy of the revised legal document. Without this, we are obligated to comply with the existing documents in our possession.

Withdrawal from the program

If your child is withdrawing from the program, please notify the Membership Director at least two weeks in advance. Pro-rated monthly refunds will only be given during the first two weeks of the month. Failure to notify the Membership Director by the prescribed time frame, the parent will be responsible for the payment of the month you are withdrawing.

Memberships are **non-refundable.**

Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P)

In keeping with New Jersey's child care center licensing requirements, we are obligated to provide you, as the parent/guardian of a child enrolled at our center, with this informational statement. The statement highlights, among other thing: your right to visit and observe our center at any time without having to secure prior permission; the center's obligation to be licensed and to comply with licensing standards; and the obligation of all citizens to report suspected child abuse/neglect/exploitation to the Child Protection and Permanency, CP&P *(formerly the Division of Youth and Family Services, DYFS).*

Here is a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website:
www.state.nj.us/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/index.html