

Gaston County Family YMCA

Afterschool Program

Parent Handbook 2011 - 2012



www.gastonymca.org

YMCA MISSION:

Welcome to the Gaston County Family YMCA Afterschool Program! We are excited to be able to serve you and your family this school year. The YMCA is a Christian-based organization that strives **“to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”**

Y AFTERSCHOOL PURPOSE:

The YMCA provides a quality, Christian-oriented experience that is safe, fun, convenient, and creative. The program presents age-appropriate opportunities that enhance the child’s spiritual, physical, social, intellectual, and emotional growth. We aim to shape character by exemplifying, teaching, and reinforcing positive values to all participants and staff. The YMCA believes in the character development traits of **Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Faith.**

The goals of our program are to:

1. Show God’s unconditional love.
2. To Support & Strengthen the Family unit.
3. Provide an environment that is safe, both physically and emotionally.
4. Teach positive life skills.
5. Support educational studies.
6. Build and encourage friendships.

ACTIVITIES:

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| - Snack Time | - Creative Time | - Homework Time |
| - Devotional Time | - Arts & Crafts | - Sports |
| - Group Games | - Teacher Work-Days | - Character Development |

AFTERSCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Central, Cherryville & South Leadership Team

JJ Woodruff	jjwoodruff@gastonymca.org	Program Director
Jyma Atwell	jatwell@gastonymca.org	Cherryville Executive Director
Steve D’Avria	sdavria@gastonymca.org	South Gaston and Central Executive Director

Stowe Family YMCA Leadership Team

Molly D’Avria	mdavria@gastonymca.org	Program Director
Kevin Wilson	kwilson@gastonymca.org	Stowe Executive Director

YMCA Afterschool At A Glance

- **Program Times** – School dismissal until 6:00 pm. (page 3)
- **Program Fees** – From \$45/weekly to \$75/weekly (page 5)
- **Registration Fee** (per child) – (page 5)
 - May 2011 - \$0
 - June 2011 - \$15
 - July 2011 - \$30
 - August 2011 through June 2012 - \$45
- **Financial Assistance** - At each Afterschool Site spaces will be set aside specifically for students in need of Financial Assistance. These spaces are limited and will fill. Early registration is highly suggested. (page 6)
- **DSS Vouchers** are accepted at several YMCA Afterschool sites. Please see inside for specific site information. (page 6)

Gaston County School Calendar:

August 22 – 24	Teacher Work Days – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCAs
August 25	First Day of School
September 5	Labor Day – YMCA Afterschool Program Closed
October 13	Early Dismissal – We will provide care from school dismissal until 6:00 pm on site and at branches
October 14	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
November 3	Early Dismissal – We will provide care from school dismissal until 6:00 pm on site and at branches
November 11	Veteran’s Day Holiday – Care provided at Central and Stowe YMCAs
November 23	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
November 24 and 25	Thanksgiving Holiday – YMCA After School Program Closed
December 21 - 23	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
December 26 – 30	Winter Annual Leave – Holiday Camp provided to those who register at Central YMCA and Stowe YMCA.
January 2	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
January 16	Martin Luther King Day - Care provided at Central and Stowe YMCAs
January 20	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
January 23	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
February 20	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
March 15	Early Dismissal – We will provide care from school dismissal until 6:00 pm on site and at branches
March 16	Teacher Work Day – Care provided at the Central and Stowe YMCA
April 5	Early Dismissal – We will provide care from school dismissal until 6:00 pm on site and at branches
April 6	Good Friday Holiday - YMCA Afterschool Program Closed
April 9 – 13	Spring Break – Holiday Camp provided to those who register at Central YMCA and Stowe YMCA.
May 28	Memorial Day Holiday – YMCA Afterschool Program Closed
June 8	Last Day of School

PARENT ORIENTATIONS:

We invite all parents/guardians to attend one of the following dates throughout the year in order to become fully informed on the who, what, where, when, and whys of Afterschool!

- Thursday, September 1st at 6:30 pm at the Central and Stowe YMCAs
- Tuesday, November 1st at 6:30 pm at the Central and Stowe YMCAs
- Wednesday, February 1st at 6:30 pm at the Central and Stowe YMCAs
- Tuesday, April 3rd at 6:30 pm at Central and Stowe YMCAs

PROGRAM DATES & HOURS:

YMCA Afterschool Care operates from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday on regular school days. Our program follows the Gaston County School District calendar. Teacher Work Days are offered from 7:00am - 6:00pm at Cherryville Elementary School, Central, and Stowe Branch YMCA sites for those who need childcare on days students are out of school. See calendar above for specific TWD dates.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

The YMCA offers two on-site Afterschool locations and fifteen off-site locations. At the Central YMCA Site, children are transported from the following elementary & middle schools to the Central Branch YMCA at 615 West Franklin Boulevard where they are picked up by parent or guardian by 6:00 pm.

Forest Heights	Grier Middle	HH Beam	Highland Charter
Holbrook Middle	Piedmont Charter	Lingerfeldt	Pleasant Ridge
Rhyne	Sadler	Southwest Middle	Woodhill
York Chester Middle			

At the Stowe YMCA Site, children are transported from the following elementary & middle schools to the Stowe Family YMCA at 196 YMCA Drive in Belmont where they are picked up by parent or guardian by 6:00 pm.

Ida Rankin	Catawba Heights	McAdenville	North Belmont
Belmont Middle	Mt. Holly Middle	Cramerton Middle	

**** Additional pick up sites may be available depending on number of requests.****

School Based Sites are at the following elementary school locations:

Belmont Central	Brookside	Carr	Chapel Grove
Cherryville	Costner	Gardner Park	Lowell
New Hope	Page	Pinewood	Robinson (+Hawk's Nest)
Sherwood	WA Bess		

SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES: (The Afterschool Care program ends PROMPTLY at 6:00 pm)

On your registration form, you choose a code word. This serves as a password that all persons designated to pick up your child will need to know. It is the parent's responsibility to give the code word to those individuals authorized to pick your child up from Afterschool Care. Please do not share this code word with your child. They do not need to know it, and may share it with unauthorized persons. The YMCA reserves the right to deny pick up to any person who does not know the child's code word and/or does not have photo identification. Only those individuals listed on the registration form are authorized to pick up your child.

CHILD SAFETY:

Your child's safety is our priority. At times, we are called to make decisions concerning their safety. If a YMCA staff member believes that the person picking up the child is under the influence when they arrive to pick up said child, we will detain the child until an alternate plan can be arranged for the transportation of those involved. We will first try to contact another family member or an emergency contact from the child's registration form. If those means are unsuccessful, a cab will be called at the person's expense. If the person who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol is unruly, uncooperative, or out of control physically, for the safety of the child and the staff member, the staff will have no choice but to contact the local authorities.

PARENT/GUARDIAN BEHAVIOR:

The safety & emotional well-being of all the children is also our priority. When picking up your child/children, we ask that courteous behavior and language be observed. No foul, profane or abusive language toward any child or staff will be tolerated. If you choose to discipline your child/children, we ask that you do so away from other children and YMCA staff. If you choose to use foul, profane or abusive language we ask that you do so away from other children and YMCA staff.

LATE PICK UP:

It is very important that your child be picked up on time, promptly at 6:00 pm. A late fee will be charged for each child not picked up by 6:00 p.m. The fee will be assessed at a rate of \$1 for each minute per child and is payable at the time you arrive to pick up your camper either by cash or drafted from your account. This fee is to be paid at the front desk and the receipt shown to the Leadership Team member who is supervising. The YMCA clock determines the correct time.

- After three late pick-ups, your child will be removed from the program.
- The YMCA staff will contact the local authorities or the Department of Social Services if parents are more than 30 minutes late.

CUSTODY ISSUES:

In cases of separated or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to such parent unless a court decree or separation document is in our files expressly forbidding such parent from picking up the child from our program, or from picking up at times not allowed by the court decree. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during Afterschool hours. The court document must specify in writing that visitation is not permitted by the non-custodial parent. Otherwise, visitation and/or pick-up will not be denied.

FINANCIAL POLICIES --PROGRAM FEES:

A non-refundable/non-transferable registration fee is required to register your child in our Afterschool Program. Fees are based on a weekly rate and each week is expected to be paid regardless of whether the child attends or not. Fees are not pro-rated for illness, vacation, suspension, etc. If a child misses an entire week (Monday-Friday) due to illness, we will credit the fees (to the next week’s tuition) **only** if a note from a doctor is provided, otherwise, payment will be due for said week. Fees may be pro-rated due to inclement weather and the Afterschool Director will determine this decision. There will be no additional fee for participants who choose to attend the full day program on Teacher Workdays.

Registration Fee (per child): Register early for a discounted fee.

- May 2011 - \$0
- June 2011 - \$15
- July 2011 - \$30
- August 2011 through June 2012 - \$45

On Site Locations (located at schools):

- \$45.00/week YMCA Family Membership (\$5.00 sibling discount)
- \$65.00/week Program Participants (\$5.00 sibling discount)
- \$45.00/week Middle School (regardless of member or participant-no other discount)

Full-Time Gaston County School Employees: (letter from Human Resources required)

- \$29.25/week YMCA Family Membership and Middle School
- \$42.25/week Program Participants

YMCA Site (located at Central and Stowe Branches):

- \$55.00/week YMCA Family Membership (\$5.00 sibling discount)
- \$75.00/week Program Participants (\$5.00 sibling discount)

Middle School Students at Y Site:

- \$45.00/week YMCA Family Membership (\$5.00 sibling discount)
- \$65.00/week Program Participants (\$5.00 sibling discount)

Gaston County Full-Time School Employee: (letter from Human Resources required):

- \$35.75/week YMCA Family Membership and Middle School
- \$48.75/week Program Participants

Note: Only one discount per family (whichever is greater) – including, but not limited to, scholarships, multiple child discounts, and GCS employee discounts.

PAYMENT POLICIES: All fees are to be set up on an automatic withdrawal from a bank account, credit card or debit card. We can draft your bank account weekly, twice monthly on the 1st and 15th, or monthly. We do not accept cash. Any and all exceptions must be cleared with the After School Director prior to registering your child. Payments for Afterschool are due each Friday by 6:00pm prior to attendance for the following week. Any payments made after 6:00pm Friday is considered late and will be charged an additional \$10.00 late fee per child.

*The YMCA reserves the right to close registration to assure proper staff ratios.

ABSENCES:

Fees are not prorated for absences, personal vacations, illnesses, suspensions, short school weeks, or closings.

REFUNDS:

Refunds will only be given as credit for a coming week and are only available for children who miss five days of the same week due to a medical reason. A doctor's note is required. Space, supplies, and instruction are saved for your child when he/she is registered, and for this reason, we cannot offer a refund in other circumstances.

RETURNED PAYMENTS:

There will be a **\$25.00 charge for any returned payment** to the YMCA. After we receive a returned payment, the balance due resulting from uncollected returned payments must be paid before your child can continue in or attend any YMCA program. If a Credit Card or Debit Card returns, we will automatically run it again. If it doesn't go through, payment must be made in full before child can attend. Continuous returned automatic withdrawals will result in your removal from the program. Please keep in mind that we do not accept payment at our After School locations.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Cancellation forms are available at the membership desk and must be received in writing by Wednesday of the week prior to the start of the week. Refunds will not be issued for non-attendance.

TAX INFORMATION:

The YMCA tax ID number is 56-0655420. Tax statements will be available on or by January 31.

SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE:

The YMCA is committed to providing quality programs regardless of one's ability to pay. Our financial assistance program is available for those who otherwise would be unable to enjoy the benefits of YMCA programs. Eligibility is determined based on applicant's income and is administered on a sliding scale which must be verified annually. For more information or an application, please inquire at the membership service desk.

- **At each Afterschool Site spaces will be set aside specifically for students in need of Financial Assistance. These spaces are limited and will fill. Early registration is highly suggested.**

VOUCHERS:

Several Afterschool Sites are licensed by the State of North Carolina and accept vouchers from the Department of Social Services. If you attend a site that offers this form of assistance you must apply for DSS Vouchers before the YMCA will offer financial assistance funds.

- Licensed Sites – Belmont Central, Brookside Elementary, Carr Elementary, Central YMCA, Chapel Grove Elementary, Cherryville Elementary, Costner Elementary, Gardner Park Elementary, New Hope Elementary, Sherwood Elementary, and WA Bess Elementary.
- Additional sites may be licensed during the 2011 – 2012 School Year.

MEDICATION:

If YMCA staff members must administer medication during the Afterschool Program or on Teacher Work Days, you must:

- Bring medication directly to the Site Director in the original prescription container.

- Complete a medication form, which includes type, time and amount of medication.
- Pick up any unused medication at the end of the prescription cycle.
- Students at licensed sites must submit shot records within first week of care.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:

The YMCA strives to exemplify, teach, and enforce positive values to all participants and staff. The YMCA believes in the values of **CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and FAITH.** Our disciplinary policies and procedures are based on positive, but strict, reinforcement of Christian principles.

CARING: Keep your hands and feet to yourself
No fighting
No throwing of objects

HONESTY: No stealing
Tell the truth

RESPECT: No profanity
Respect your counselor, Site Directors and fellow participants
Take care of equipment, property and the environment
Treat others like you would want to be treated

RESPONSIBILITY: Stay with your group at all times!
Keep up with your belongings
Leave the program site better than you found it

FAITH: Attentive during devotion and value time

INCLUSION:

While in the Afterschool Program, every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodations for mentally and physically challenged children. Afterschool will not accept children who are (1) of danger to themselves, (2) of danger to others, or (3) a disruption to the normal activities making it unreasonably difficult for other children to enjoy the Afterschool program. Any of the above reasons will be grounds for dismissal. A parent/guardian must discuss special conditions or circumstances involving their child with the After School Director. This must be completed prior to registration so that the administration may make a determination if reasonable accommodations can be made for your child.

DISCIPLINE:

Our goal is to guide children in becoming happy, responsible, and cooperative participants through positive teaching techniques. In the event that behavior requires discipline:

- Staff action will not damage the child's self-image or embarrass the child.
- Staff action will help children learn self-control, choose alternatives, identify feelings, and develop an understanding and respect of feelings for others.
- Staff will communicate regularly with families regarding behavior concerns.
- Every effort will be made by staff to enlist the cooperation of the child and parents to solve problems.

The disciplinary process could be enacted in the following manner:

- Staff members provide positive guidance and redirection at the program site. The child will be spoken to in hopes that discussion and redirecting the child to another activity is all that is required to correct the problem. A warning will also be given.
- If the discussion and redirection does not help, the child will be put in "time out" for a short period. (one- minute for every year of the child's age).
- Should problem behavior continue, the Counselor or Site Director will have a one-on-one with the child and a Discipline Form will be completed and discussed with the parent/guardian via phone call or upon pick-up.
- If behavior continues, the parents or guardians will be called at work or elsewhere and asked to pick up their child immediately.

- Should this process prove unsuccessful and behavior problems are not corrected, the child may be put on suspension from the program. Please note: there is no financial compensation for time out of program due to behavior problems.
- Hitting, slapping, kicking, and causing physical harm to another child or staff or other related behavior issues is an **automatic one-day suspension**, even if among siblings or other family relationships.
- Fighting is an **automatic three-day suspension**, even if among siblings or other family relationships.
- After a third suspension for the same behavior issue, termination from the program will occur.
- Each behavioral issue and the decided discipline is based on a case-by-case basis in light of the severity of the case.

TIME-OUT - "Time-out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time – one-minute for every year of the child's age - from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other discipline techniques. The "time-out" is located away from the group activity, but within the staff's sight. During "time-out", the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior that led to his/her removal from the group. After a brief interval, the counselor discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same respect and affection shown to the other children.

Immediate notice to the parents of suspension on day of occurrence and one or more days following suspension from our program can occur if the following inappropriate behavior is used (but is not limited to):

- Harming another child or staff person (hitting, biting, throwing of objects, etc)
- Stealing
- Damaging property - (In the event that a child deliberately damages any property or equipment that the YMCA is using, the child/parent will be responsible for the cost of repair or replacement)
- Being totally disruptive and uncontrollable in the group
- Repeated inappropriate behavior in a two-week period
- Using foul language

Dismissal from our program could occur by the following (but is not limited to):

- Inappropriate behavior(s) that can not be changed after repeated attempts
- When behavior of a child becomes detrimental to self and others
- The YMCA reserves the right to evaluate the consequences of each case in light of its severity and content.

EMERGENCIES:

Medical - Routine cuts; our staff will treat bumps and scrapes. In the case of serious illness or accident involving your child, you will be contacted immediately or we will try to reach the emergency contacts on your list. In the event you cannot be reached, your authorization signed on the child's health form allows us to secure prompt treatment. Should there be any changes in the emergency contact phone numbers, please notify us immediately. Please note: In the event of serious emergency, 911 will be called first.

Inclement weather – If school is closed during the school day due to inclement weather YMCA After School will also be closed due to unsafe travel conditions and closure of the school site.

If schools are cancelled due to inclement weather before the opening of school, the Afterschool program may operate a program at the Central and Stowe Branches if it is safe for our staff to travel. Please check the YMCA website, www.gastonymca.org, or our Facebook Fan Page for information on program operation.

If an individual school is cancelled due to a particular emergency, a program may be held at the YMCA site.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication with the parents is very important for our staff, whether it be in an emergency, discipline problem or just an update on activities coming up. Please make sure we have accurate telephone numbers and email address to reach you or to reach emergency contact persons.

WE NEED YOU...

We provide several ways for you to let us know how we are doing. Please use any or all of the following systems to keep in touch with us, get involved, and give us feedback:

Family Events - Get involved! These are planned for you and your family!

Volunteer - There is many opportunities at the YMCA...watch for requests for volunteers.

LOST and FOUND will be collected each day and kept in a container. Items will be donated to Goodwill at the end of each month. Please see an Afterschool staff member if your child cannot locate an item. Labeling items will make it easier to locate them.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT DAMAGES:

Parents are financially responsible for intentional damage to all equipment and facilities caused by their child.

Staff as Babysitters, Tutors, etc:

Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, tutoring outside of Afterschool hours, and inviting children to their home. There are no exceptions given unless there was an established prior relationship between the employee, child and parents. **Violation is grounds for that staff's immediate dismissal.** Please do not put our staff in a compromising position by asking them to go against this policy.

TEACHER WORK DAY PROGRAMS:

Teacher Work Days are offered from 7:00am - 6:00pm for those fulltime Afterschool participants who need childcare on days students are out of school. Teacher Work Days are included in the cost of the YMCA Afterschool program for all fulltime current participants.

- Teacher Work Day care may be provided at the Cherryville Elementary site or children may be bussed to the Central YMCA depending on enrollment. Decisions will be made a week prior to each Teacher Work Day.

HOLIDAY CAMPS:

A Holiday Camp and Spring Break Camp will be offered over extended school breaks as noted in the school calendar on page 3. Camp will offered at Cherryville Elementary, Central YMCA, and the Stowe YMCA and begin each morning at 7:00am and end at 6:00pm. Children need to bring lunch, snack, swimsuit, and towel, each day. Registration is required to participate in this program. Holiday Camp is not included in the cost of After School.

Based on interest and prior registration the Central YMCA may provide transportation from Cherryville for Holiday Camps. Please contact the Program Director for more information.

