the YMCA

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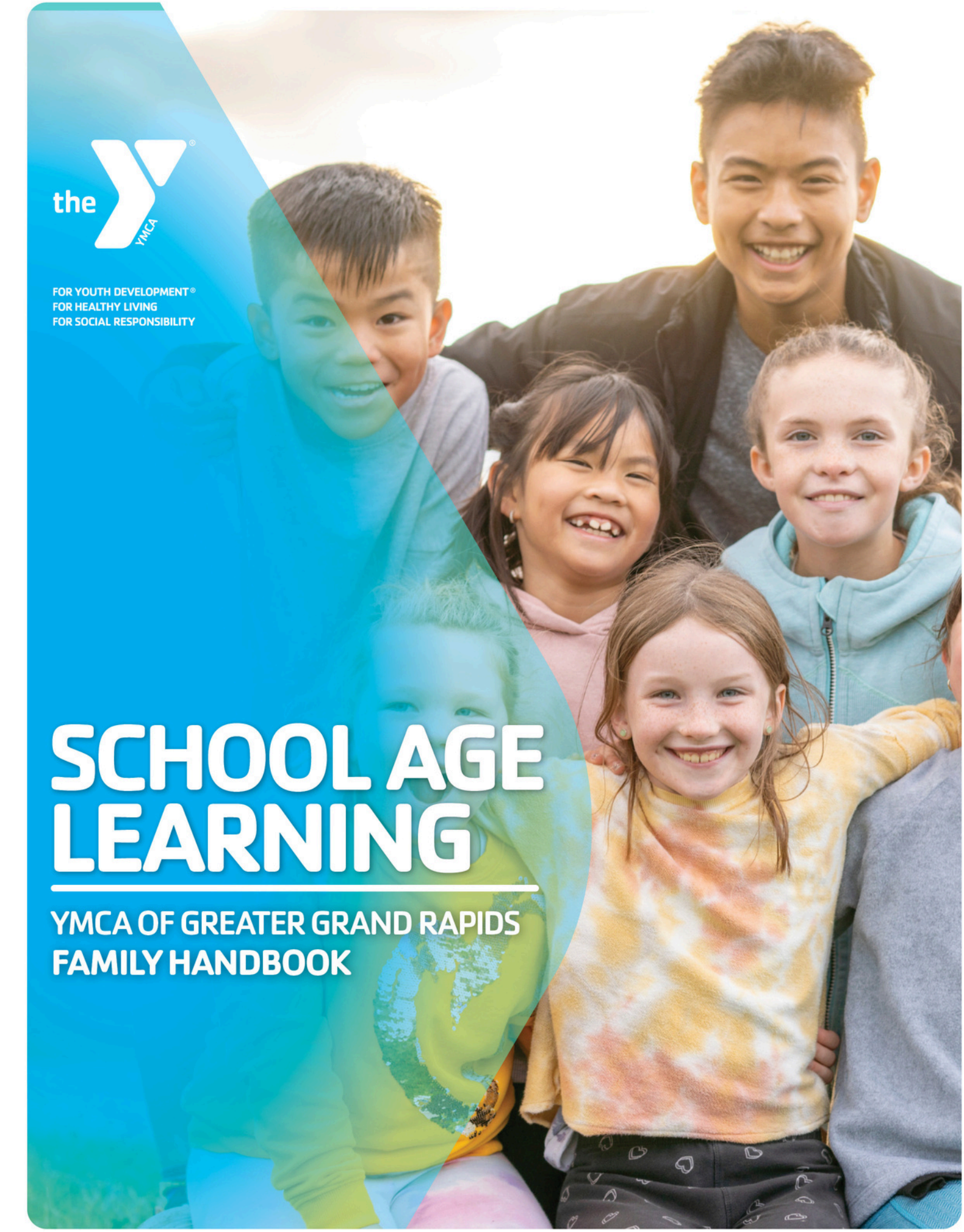
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



SCHOOL AGE LEARNING

YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS FAMILY HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO THE YMCA OF GREATER GRAND RAPIDS BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS!

Dear families,

Welcome to the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids School Age Before and After School Programs. We are delighted to have your family join our YMCA community. Our team provides youth with a safe, engaging, and enriching experience rooted in the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Inclusion. It is a privilege to be part of your youth's growth and development, and we are honored to share in their learning journey. Our goal is to support each student educationally, emotionally, and socially, helping to build a strong foundation for lifelong success. Together, we look forward to fostering an environment where every youth can thrive, achieve their goals, and feel valued. We are committed to not only offering a stimulating program but also to ensuring a nurturing and supportive atmosphere for every participant. Welcome to the YMCA, we look forward to an exciting and meaningful year ahead!

You have made a great investment in your youth's future!

YMCA Youth Development Leadership

This family handbook provides important information about your youth's participation in the program, including our philosophy, policies, and general program details. We encourage your family to look at this together prior to your youth's admission to the program. Any questions guardians may have regarding this handbook should be directed to the Youth Director.

YMCA MISSION STATEMENT

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 and 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, including providing opportunities for financial assistance.

Our Cause at the Y

Strengthening community is our cause. We believe that positive, lasting personal and social change can only come about when we all work together to invest in our youth, our health, and our neighbors. That is why we focus our work on three areas, known as Pillars:

- **Youth Development:** Empowering young people to reach their full potential.
- **Healthy Living:** Improving individual and community well-being.
- **Social Responsibility:** Providing support and inspiring action in our communities.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to be the most impactful convener of community resources focused on helping all youth and adults succeed and be their best selves.

Our Philosophy

YMCA youth development programs foster each youth's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development through opportunities and experiences which focus on achievement, relationships and belonging.

It is our belief that each youth is a unique individual with his or her own rate of development. Our goal is to introduce youth to as many positive experiences as possible that will assist in their development of individuality and encourage an awareness of themselves and others.

The planning of each activity is offered in a physically and emotionally safe environment consistent with evidence-based principles of youth development. Every youth is encouraged to develop at his or her own unique rate by encouraging skill development and leadership opportunities.

Through the Y's programs, youth participate in fun and educational activities that help them with:

- **ACHIEVEMENT** - Learn and master skills that help them realize their passion, talents, and potential.
- **RELATIONSHIP** - Build friendships with youth and staff to foster social skills, learn to navigate social situations, and build confidence.
- **BELONGING** - Provide a space where youth feel safe, welcome, and free to express their individuality.

We are partners in youth development. We aim to provide opportunities to strengthen the family unit and give an opportunity for the family and the YMCA to work, play, learn, and thrive together. The YMCA also collaborates with other organizations that are committed to serving the needs of all youth and families. It is through these collaborations, a strong youth development focus, and intentional program assessment that the Y delivers consistent quality programs.

Admission

Families may enroll their youth either on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the availability of the program. Part-time enrollment requires a minimum of 2 days. Youth will be enrolled on a first come, first served basis, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or creed. Full-time enrollment will be considered a priority, over part-time. Part-time families may be asked to change their schedule to accommodate incoming full-time enrollment. Ages served vary by location and they can be found on our website.

Before a youth can begin attending the program, it is mandatory that the program has the following items:

- Completed, submitted, and approved online enrollment packet, including Child Information Record and Billing and Enrollment Policy Agreement
- Food program enrollment form and income eligibility statement, if applicable
- Additional paperwork, as deemed necessary by the YMCA or MiLEAP Childcare Licensing

Hours of Operation and Holidays

The YMCA Before and/or After school programs are typically open Monday through Friday, though specific days and times may vary by site. Hours of operation for each location is available on our website. We work in partnership with our school locations, which means there may be times when programming is closed in alignment with school decisions. Closures occur when there is an immediate concern for the safety of staff or youth, or when the licensed programming space is unavailable.

In these cases, the YMCA will make every effort to communicate this information to families, with as much notice as possible. If the closure is scheduled in advance, tuition may be prorated. For unexpected closures, the YMCA will not be responsible for refunds.

The program will be closed on the following days:

- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Second Thursday of November for Professional Development Day
- Professional Development Day (30-day notice)

Inclement Weather Process

The Y will be open for normal hours at our before and after school sites to serve our members and community who need care during inclement weather. The Y believes participants rely on the services of the Y, especially for employment purposes, and participate at their own risk.

School Age programs located in school buildings may remain open even if the school day is cancelled by the district. If snow day care is not offered at the school your youth attends, please visit our website to find the nearest program locations available.

For more information, please refer to the Snow Day Expectations under the Schedules and Schedule Changes section.

In the event a school site closes midday, YMCA leadership, with the school administration, will decide whether the program will remain open. If a situation arises in which the program decides to close, the YMCA will ensure that all families are notified. If appropriate, closure will be included on the Y's social media and GRAIL (TV/Radio) communications.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE, WAITLIST AND FEES

Families will be informed of tuition amounts at the time of registration. A $25 registration fee per youth will be added to the first week of attendance. Tuition is based on your youth's registration, not attendance. Tuition will be adjusted to the next lower rate plan for scheduled school closures (with a two-day minimum) but it remains the same for unforeseen program closures.

Payments are due on Monday of each program week and will be automatically drafted from the preferred payment method on file. Valid payment method must be on file for automatic weekly drafts. A 3% fee applies to credit card transactions, and a $.54 fee applies to bank account transactions per draft.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure payment information is current and that sufficient funds are available. A $10 declined payment fee will be assessed for any denied payments. Past-due balances must be paid immediately, or a payment agreement must be filed with the YMCA childcare billing department for the youth to remain enrolled. Failure to make payment for two consecutive weeks may result in termination of enrollment.

A late pick-up fee of $1 per minute will be charged for every minute a youth remains in programming after the program's closing time.

Discounts and Financial Aid

Providing quality care for your youth is an important investment, and the YMCA is committed to helping make our programs accessible to as many families as possible. We help qualifying families through our Annual Campaign to help reduce tuition. Families interested in applying are invited to fill out the online Financial Assistance Application. Families who wish to support the campaign through a donation can contact the Youth Director for more information.

The YMCA also accepts childcare scholarships through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Most scholarships do not cover full tuition. If tuition is not fully covered, families are responsible for any co-payments. Families are responsible for completing all required paperwork to keep their scholarship active. If a scholarship is discontinued, the family becomes responsible for the full tuition.

We offer the following discounts:

- Sibling Discount: 5% off for the oldest youth. If multiple siblings are enrolled, all youth except the youngest are eligible for the discount.
- YMCA Full-Time Staff Discount: 20% off for youth in Toddler through School Age rooms (not applicable in infant or wobbler room).
- Full-time, hourly, front-line YMCA childcare staff: 50% off tuition for youth enrolled in Wobbler through School Age rooms (not applicable in infant room).

Waitlist

Families offered a spot from the waitlist are required to begin attendance within two weeks of accepting the offer. If a later start date is requested, a holding fee equal to 50% of the weekly tuition rate per youth per week will be charged to reserve the space. This same fee applies when maintaining enrollment during extended absences of multiple weeks.

SCHEDULE AND SCHEDULE CHANGES

Before- and after-school care provides supervision and engaging activities for youth outside of regular school hours. These programs serve as a crucial service for working parents and create a structured, safe, and enriching environment for young people.

Before-School Care Expectations

Before-school care helps youth start their day in a calm, organized way before school begins.

- **Time:** Typically runs for one to three hours in the morning before school starts.
- **Activities**: May include breakfast, reading, arts and crafts, free play, outdoor play, or quiet time.
- **Daily flow**: Youth arrive, participate in relaxed activities and eat a provided breakfast before heading to their classrooms for the day. Staff members ensure a smooth and timely transition to the school day. The daily flow varies based on program location.

After-School Care Expectations

After-school care offers a supervised environment for youth from the end of the school day until their parents or guardians can pick them up.

- **Time:** Typically runs for two or more hours after school ends.
- **Activities:** Programs provide a mix of structured and independent activities that balance learning with recreation. This may include:
  - **Academic support:** Time to work on homework and school-based work. Staff will provide help as needed.
  - **Enrichment:** Activities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), character education, literacy, creative arts, sports, and life skills.
  - **Recreation:** Indoor and outdoor free play, sports, and board games.
- **Daily flow:** After school, youth are signed in, given a healthy snack, and then participate in various activities, including outdoor play as weather permits. An activity schedule outlines what youth can expect on a given day. The daily flow varies based on program location.

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes are intended for long-term adjustments of four weeks or more; requests for fewer than four weeks will not be accommodated. All schedule change requests are processed based on program availability and cannot be guaranteed. Approval of a schedule change may result in the original schedule no longer being available in the future.

We understand that family needs may change, and schedules may need to be adjusted. Part-time families may request additional days if space is available. A minimum of two weeks' written notice is required for all schedule changes. Schedule changes must be submitted in writing to the youth director. This notice allows us to evaluate staffing and maintain youth-to-staff ratios. Every effort will be made to accommodate the requested changes.

Please note that fees are not adjusted for absences or unexpected closures. Program fees pay the direct operational costs of maintaining your youth's reserved space, including staffing and program resources, regardless of attendance.

HALF DAY, NO SCHOOL DAY AND SNOW DAY CARE

Programs may offer half day care in the case of school closure for teacher professional development or other pre-identified site-specific events. These program types are regulated; therefore the process of collecting information for participation must be in alignment with our registration process for school year programs.

Half Day Care

Programs may offer Half Day Care on days the school closes early for professional development, holidays, school breaks or other preplanned events.

Expectations

- Registration for half day care will be available no later than 30 days prior to the targeted half day .
- Parent/guardians are required to sign up at least 14 days prior.
- If it is determined that not enough youth are enrolled, program leadership will share this information with staff and families, no later than 7 days prior to the targeted half day.

No School Day Care

Programs may offer No School Day Care in case of a school closure for professional development, holidays or school breaks.

Expectations

- Registration for No School Day Care will be available no later than 30 days prior to the targeted no school day.
- Parent/guardians are required to sign up at least 14 days prior.
- If it is determined that not enough youth are enrolled, program leadership will share this information with families no later than 7 days prior to the targeted no school day.

Snow Days

Programs may offer snow day care in the case of school closure for weather. Snow day programming may be housed at the branch or school site.

Expectations

- If the site does not provide lunch, youth must bring a prepared lunch which is mindful of our nut-free zone rules.
- Youth must come in appropriate attire which keeps them warm and able to participate in all activities, including outdoor activities weather permitting.
- Program space is limited, and all registration packets must be submitted and reviewed prior to attending.
- Snow days are subject to cancellation due to compliance and safety of the staff.

ATTENDANCE

Before School

Upon arrival, each youth must be signed into the program on the designated sign-in sheet by the individual dropping them off, including the time of drop-off and their signature or initials. The individual dropping off must be at least 16 years of age. YMCA staff will sign the youth out when they are released to school.

After School

If a youth will not be attending after school care on a day they are scheduled to, guardians must notify the school-age program via phone, text, or email prior to the start of program hours.

Upon arrival, each youth will be signed into the program by YMCA staff on the sign-in/out sheet. The YMCA is not responsible for ensuring that youth arrive at the after-school program from school or another location. However, if a youth who is scheduled to attend does not arrive as expected, YMCA staff will make every reasonable effort to ensure the youth's safety and to notify families. If a youth who is scheduled does not arrive at program; staff are trained to take the following steps:

- YMCA staff will check with the school office to see if the youth was absent or went home early from school.
- Within 10 minutes of the final bell, YMCA staff will attempt to contact the youth parent(s) or legal guardian(s) by phone. A voicemail will be left when that option is available.
- If staff are unable to reach the parent(s) or guardian(s), they will proceed to contact the additional emergency contacts listed, in the order they appear on the Child Information Record.
- If staff are unable to reach any of the listed contacts within a reasonable timeframe, the Assistant Youth Director or Youth Director will be notified and will assume responsibility for continuing contact attempts and determining appropriate next steps.

If a family alters their regular after-school program schedule due to extracurricular activities, a school function, or a short-term change in family plans, the parent or guardian must provide written notification to the YMCA.

- If the schedule change is for a short period, the regular tuition rate will still apply.
- If the schedule change extends over multiple weeks, families will pick from the following options:
  - If the youth will not be attending the program; a holding fee equivalent to 50% of tuition will be charged for each week the youth is not attending, to reserve their spot in the program.
  - If the schedule is changed to omit days or to attend different days, families will pay the new tuition rate (including a 2-day minimum per session). Returning to the previous schedule will be based on program availability at that time and cannot be guaranteed.

Late Pick Up

If a youth has not been picked up by program closing time, staff will follow the procedures outlined below:

- Staff will remain with the youth until they are picked up.
- When the program ends, staff will call the primary and secondary contact on the Child Information Record.
- 15 minutes after program ends, staff will contact all authorized people on the Child Information Record.
- 60 minutes after the program end time and if no authorized contacts have returned calls or arrived for pick-up, staff will contact Child Protective Services.
  - Staff will follow the guidance of Child Protective Services and/or Law Enforcement Officers.

If an emergency arises that may delay pick-up, please notify the program site as soon as possible and provide an expected time of pick-up so staff can plan accordingly. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to sign a late pickup notice upon arrival. A late pick-up fee of $1 per minute will be charged.

RELEASE AND AUTHORIZED PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Youth will only be released to individuals listed on the Child Information Record. Authorized individuals must be at least 16 years of age and be able to present a valid form of identification at the time of pick-up.

If there is an immediate need to authorize an alternate pick-up person, notification must be provided in writing. If written communication is not possible, a phone call to the Youth Director or Site Coordinator will be considered official notification. Written communication must follow as soon as possible. Any individual unknown to staff must show a valid photo ID.

Youth will be released to either parent or guardian unless a court order prohibits release to a particular parent. A copy of the order prohibiting release must be provided to the Youth Director.

Separated Parent
Youth will be released to either parent or guardian unless a court order prohibits release to a particular parent. A copy of the court order prohibiting release must be provided to the Youth Director.

Emergency Release
If a parent or guardian is unable to pick up their youth and an individual not listed on the Child Information Record must pick up the youth, notification must be provided in writing. If written communication is not possible, a phone call to the Youth Director or Site Coordinator will be considered official notification. Written communication must follow as soon as possible. Any individual unknown to staff must show valid photo ID.

Release to an Older Sibling
Parents or guardians may request that their youth be released to an older sibling. The sibling must be at least 16 years old, listed on the Child Information Record, and able to present a valid photo ID.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If you plan to withdraw your youth, a two-week written notice is required. Families who do not provide two weeks' notice will be responsible for paying for two full weeks. Two consecutive weeks of un-notified absences may result in program termination.

Involuntary Withdrawal
A parent or guardian may be asked to withdraw their youth from the program under certain circumstances. Causes for involuntary withdrawal may include:

- Noncompliance with the behavior management policy
- Violence or threats: Any action or threat intended to scare, harm, or intimidate another youth, a staff member, or oneself
- Unsafe or high-risk behavior: Any behavior that compromises the safety of other youth, staff, or oneself

Consequences of Disenrollment
Youth who are removed from a YMCA program due to involuntary withdrawal will not be eligible to enroll in future programs (e.g., Winter Break Day Camp, Spring Break Day Camp, Summer Day Camp, Before and After School Programming) for a minimum of six months from the date of disenrollment.

Re-Enrollment
After the six-month period, eligibility for re-enrollment will be determined at the discretion of the Youth Director. Families wishing to re-register must meet with the Youth Director prior to the program starting. The youth Director may require a trial period and other expectations for youth who are re-enrolled in the program.

Suspension From School
If a youth is suspended from school, YMCA programs will follow the school's schedule. The youth will not be able to attend the program on days of suspension, and tuition will not be prorated for these days.

PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Supervision

The program staff will always provide appropriate care and supervision of youth by both sight and sound.

The YMCA will maintain MiLEAP Child Care licensing ratios of one staff member for every 18 school-age youth, or portion thereof, present. School-age youth are defined as a child who is eligible to attend kindergarten or higher but less than 13 years of age.

Curriculum

Each school age program will have its own unique daily routine and schedule. Each schedule will include times for gross motor/outdoor play, fine motor, quiet, and physical activities, meals, and transitions. The schedule will be posted on the parent/guardian board and updated if changes are made.

The YMCA before and after school program will provide an enriching contrast to the formal school program. It will offer activities such as outdoor play, team sports, food experiences, dramatics, art, music, crafts, games, free choice, quiet time, and the use of community resources (when available) to explore new interests and relationships. The YMCA program will offer interesting areas for young people in a station format, allowing them to participate in what most interests them.

Stations or activities, in a free-choice format, may include the following:

Components	Time	Purpose/Experience
STEM/STEAM	30min/weekly	Planned activities which incorporate science, technology, engineering, art, and math. These activities are hands-on experiences which allow youth to work through elements of the design process.
Academic Enrichment/Support	15min/daily	Time to focus on homework and school-based work. Youth who do not have homework will be offered other activities.
Character Education	15min/daily	Planned activities that emphasize and support the core values of the YMCA.
Outdoor Time	30min/session	Time for youth to enjoy nature, be engaged in physical activity and interactive games, or simply just play!

Components	Time	Purpose/Experience
Literacy/Math	30min/weekly	Hands-on and interactive ways to support fluency and enrich learning.
Nutrition Education	Minimum of 6 activities/year	Planned activities that explore healthy eating in fun and creative ways.
Physical Education	30min/daily	Intentional and inclusive based games that promote movement.

Outdoor Time

The YMCA encourages lifelong healthy habits and will provide at least 30 minutes of outdoor time per session, weather permitting. If outdoor time is not possible due to weather conditions, the program will offer indoor activities that support gross motor skills and active play.

It is assumed that if a youth is in attendance, they are well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

The play area and equipment will be inspected daily for safety. Areas or equipment deemed unsafe will not be used until repairs are completed, or the equipment is removed from the premises.

Screen Time

Screen time may be permitted in limited doses. Videos or movies rated G and 30 minutes or less may be shown. Parents/guardians will be notified prior to the activity. Notification may be provided by including the details on the curriculum calendar. If the information is not available on the calendar, a separate notification will be sent to parents/guardians.

To help youth stay engaged and safe during program activities, personal phones, tablets, smartwatches, and other electronic devices are not allowed during program hours, unless required for a documented developmental need or for completing homework.

Field Trips

When a field trip is planned, parents/guardians will be notified at least 14 calendar days in advance. All youth must have a signed permission slip from a parent/guardian. This permission slip will include details about the field trip, including travel arrangements, planned activities, and any meal information.

Transportation

The YMCA School Age Programs do not provide transportation for youth to or from the program, except for field trips with prior written consent or in extreme situations that require evacuation. All transportation will be provided by school district buses, contracted bus services, or YMCA buses that have passed all licensing and state-required inspections.

Restrooms

Participants in our before- and after-school programs are expected to use the restroom independently. Exceptions are made only after a discussion with program leadership and when additional support or accommodation has been agreed upon.

The YMCA values youth's privacy. Staff will assist in rare situations and minimal needs; for example, helping with a button after the youth has made multiple attempts on their own.

Altering Appearance

Staff members doing a youth's hair, adding nail polish, nail trims or other means of altering a youth's appearance can be perceived differently from family to family. Families' verbal and written consent is required to do a youth's hair (comb out, braid, ponytails, etc.), polishing nails, or any other means of altering a youth's appearance. This includes instances such as when a program requires long hair to be in a ponytail for swimming or may have a hair salon in the dramatic play area.

Birthday Celebrations

The YMCA celebrates the milestones of each youth participating in Y programs. All locations strive to acknowledge a youth's birthday in a way which creates equitable experiences and lifelong healthy habits. The Y serves a diverse community with varying access to resources, personal needs, and dietary restrictions. Families are asked to work in coordination with the Youth Director to determine if there are any allergies or dietary restrictions in the program. Any items brought in for birthday celebrations must be store-bought, individually wrapped and appropriate portions for youth. Families are encouraged to bring in items which enhance the curriculum.

Families who do not celebrate birthdays are encouraged to share their customs and preferences to support their youth's beliefs.

Lost and Found

The YMCA is not responsible for lost items. All program sites will have a designated spot for items left behind. Please check with the staff if you need assistance. Unclaimed lost and found property will be donated to local charities.

Bringing Items from Home

The nature of YMCA programs allows youth to experience a variety of engaging activities while in attendance. Out of respect for the activities taking place in the program, the connections amongst peers, and to ensure things are kept safe we ask that the following guidelines be followed:

What youth can bring (all must be labeled with the youth's first and last name):

- Backpack to carry belongings
- Sunscreen SPF 30+ and waterproof (Spray-On recommended)
- Water bottle
- Weather appropriate attire

What youth need to leave at home:

- All electronics, including cell phones
- Toys: stuffed animals, action figures, cards, etc.
- Unhealthy Food: candy, soda, etc.
- Money

FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The YMCA is committed to maintaining close, positive relationships with the parents and guardians of every youth enrolled in our programs. We strive to incorporate family culture, language, and experiences into our curriculum and daily routines. Staff are required to communicate frequently with families, in a positive and professional manner.

Information shared with families should focus on the youth's overall experience in the program. **For youth requiring special accommodation, families may request a daily report including:**

- Food intake: time, type of food, and amount eaten
- Sleeping patterns: including when and how long the youth slept
- Elimination patterns: including bowel movements, consistency, and frequency; as related by the youth
- Developmental milestones
- Changes in the child's usual behaviors

We encourage families to stay engaged and informed about their youths' program experience. **Staff are expected to communicate regularly through multiple channels, including:**

- Monthly Program Updates: Highlights, news, and program needs (usually shared via newsletter)
- Program-Specific Updates: Information shared via email, flyers, and newsletters
- Volunteer Opportunities: Shared via email, flyers, and newsletters
- Incident reports: Families are notified the same day an injury or incident occurs
- Behavior reports: Provided to families when challenging behavior arises
- Field Trip Permission Slips: Sent as needed for youth participation in trips or special activities
- Memos and Notifications: for immediate needs or changes to the program
- Changes to Program Operations: Information such as program closures due to holidays, professional development, or school schedules, shared via email, flyers, and newsletters

Photography and Videography

Photos and videos of children taken by the YMCA or by families cannot be shared on social media without written consent from the families of all youth shown in the photo or video. Staff will remind families that photos or videos cannot be taken if the youth pictured are not approved for photography or videography. Program staff maintains a list of youth approved to be photographed or recorded.

Grant Funding

YMCA programs are occasionally supported through grant funding provided by various communities, state, or federal sources. Each grant has its own specific requirements, which may include collecting program attendance, conducting family or youth surveys, or hosting site visits to ensure program expectations are met. Families and youth may be invited to participate in these feedback opportunities, which help the Grantees and the YMCA evaluate program quality and maintain funding that supports continued access and improvement.

Hello Cards

“Hello Cards”, or cards with information about staff, are posted at each programming site to help families identify program staff. Each staff member’s photo and relevant information are displayed so anyone visiting can learn more about our team.

Grievances

We value open communication and want to ensure that if you have a concern regarding your youth’s experience in our programs, they are addressed promptly and respectfully. If a concern arises, we ask that you follow these steps:

- Schedule a Meeting: Arrange a time to speak with staff and/or the Youth Director. Scheduling a time that works for all parties allows everyone to give their full attention to the conversation.
- Come Prepared: Be ready for an open discussion. Share your concerns, thoughts, and ideas, and be receptive to feedback and perspectives from staff and program leadership. Bring examples of specific incidents or observations, if available.
- Collaborate on Solutions: Work together to identify strategies, support, or next steps to address the concern effectively. Be sure everyone is clear about what was discussed and the desired outcome, including timeframes.

YMCA Membership

Each YMCA offers a variety of programs for family members, including youth, individual, and family membership. We encourage families to plan healthy and fun activities for the entire family. The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids provides a wonderful atmosphere where families can grow as a unit and improve their health by engaging in fitness/wellness activities. If you are interested in a YMCA membership, please contact the Youth Director or visit the membership desk at any YMCA branch.

Behavior Management

Self-management skills and positive social interactions among youth and adults are encouraged and help maximize everyone's enjoyment of the program. To encourage positive self-esteem and increased internalization of self-control, YMCA programs use age-appropriate, positive guidance methods including reminders, distraction, logical consequences, and redirection. Consistent rules are clearly stated, and youth are expected to work and play within known limits. The behavior expected of youth is based on age and developmental level.

When assisting youth in managing their behavior, Y staff will:

- Model appropriate behaviors with youths, as well as appropriate expressions of feelings.
- Tailor behavior expectations to the youth's development level.
- Anticipate problem situations and intervene by distracting the youth and redirecting them to a positive alternative.
- Engage youth in cooperative problem solving by examining alternatives, identifying consequences, and choosing appropriate action.
- Talk with youth to help them understand why that behavior was inappropriate.
- Protect the safety of the youths and staff by establishing clear expectations and creating a safe environment through staff proximity in the program space.

An atmosphere of trust is established when youth know that they will not be hurt or be allowed to hurt others. Staff members strive to help young people become acquainted with themselves and their feelings. This will help youth learn to cope with their feelings and express them responsibly.

Program staff will work with families to address the challenging behavior as needed. Positive behavior support strategies will be utilized to help the youth be successful.

In cases where consistent challenging behaviors continue, the Y will:

- Maintain consistent documentation of the behaviors observed.
- Meet with staff to develop a YMCA Student Success Plan for an identified period.
- Meet with family to discuss the observed behaviors and review the YMCA Student Success Plan. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for families to continue to receive uninterrupted care.
- Implement the strategies outlined in the YMCA Student Success Plan for the identified period.

After the YMCA Student Success Plan is implemented, the youth director, staff, and family will meet to review, re-evaluate, and continue the plan as needed. The program may recommend other support. Continued challenging behavior, including but not limited to disruptive or dangerous behavior, may result in removal from program services.

The Y provides care exclusively in a group setting designed to meet the needs of youth within a group care environment. The program does not provide one-on-one or individualized care outside of the normal care and supervision of the group.

Staff and volunteers will avoid the use of competitive situations, comparative remarks, or labeling youth. All the following means of punishment are prohibited:

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.
- Placing any substances in a youth's mouth, including but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- Restricting a youth's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a youth.
- Depriving a youth of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Excluding youth from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.
- Excluding youth from daily learning experiences.
- Isolating a youth in an adjacent room, closet, locked room, box, hallway, darkened area, play area, or another area where the youth cannot be seen or supervised.

Time out will not be used in combination with instructional approaches that teach youth what to do in place of unwanted behavior.

Inclusion

The YMCA values a welcoming and respectful program environment for all participants and families. Our programs are designed to reflect a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Families are encouraged to share traditions, experiences, and interests that are meaningful to them. Program materials, including books, play materials, visual displays, and food experiences, are thoughtfully selected to help participants learn about and appreciate a wide range of cultures and experiences.

Supportive Environment

The YMCA is committed to being inclusive and supporting all youth to have a positive experience. We work with families to provide extra support when needed for developmental, physical, or behavioral growth.

While we welcome collaboration with professionals or specialists that families may be working with, the YMCA does not provide one-on-one or individualized care. At enrollment, we ask families to share important information about their youth's needs so staff can plan accordingly. Youth Directors or Assistant Youth Directors will review all enrollment information, including the health and behavioral notification form, and share relevant information with staff to help support each youth.

The YMCA believes every youth is unique and valued. Staff use books, visual aids, and special guests to challenge gender roles and encourage youth to explore and express their personal identity in a safe and supportive environment.

Therapy

At times, students may be scheduled for behavioral, physical, occupational, or speech therapy. YMCA school age programs will make every effort to accommodate therapists and support personnel and to make time and space available for treatments. If a youth receives therapy or support services, families must contact the program director at least two weeks in advance to schedule treatment times that are most appropriate for the student, as well as the other program participants. A visible space must be used.

Therapists and support personnel are considered supervised volunteers and must complete all required training, documentation, and background checks as required by licensing standards and YMCA policies and procedures. Therapists and support personnel must sign in and out in the volunteer logbook, recording the exact times of arrival and departure along with their signature

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Medication

The program will administer prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication with written permission from a parent/guardian and/or the youth's health care provider, if required.

All medications, including over-the-counter medicine, must be in the original container and clearly labeled with your youth's name. YMCA staff will give or apply medication according to the directions on the container and using the provided dosage device, unless we have written instructions from your youth's physician specifying otherwise.

Prescription medication bottles must have a pharmacy label that lists:

- Youth's first and last name
- Physician's name
- Name and strength of the medication
- Instructions to administer the medication
- Date the prescription was filled
- Medication expiration date

Fever-reducing medications will not be administered for fevers due to illness.

All medications will be checked for expiration upon administration. Medications will be returned or destroyed once they have expired, or when you determine it is no longer needed. Over-the-counter medications will only be kept onsite for as long as necessary and cannot be stored for the entire school year.

Sunscreen, antibiotic cream and bug spray will be administered with annual written consent on record.

Communicable Diseases

To support a healthy environment, youth, staff, and volunteers will be sent home, or asked not to come in, if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater*
- Diarrhea: Three instances of abnormal, loose, watery stools
- Vomiting
- Unexplained or new rash
- Red eyes with discharge
- Sores that are open, draining, or appear infected.
- Not feeling well enough to participate in activities
- Uncontrollable cough
- Lice or Nits

*Temperature taken under the arm must have one degree added to the temperature read.

If your youth becomes ill during program hours, they must be picked up within one hour of staff notifying you.

Program leadership reserves the right to determine whether a youth is well enough to participate in programming. Site leaders work closely with YMCA childcare leaders to ensure each situation is carefully considered.

For the safety of all participants, the YMCA also reserves the right to remove youth from programming if there is a concern about exposure to communicable diseases.

Youth, staff, and volunteers may return to programming when:

- They are symptom-free for 24 hours without medication or per health department guidance
- Temperatures have been below 100.4 degrees for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Prescribed antibiotics have been taken for at least 24 hours.
- Nasal discharge is not thick, yellow, and/or green.
- Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- If applicable, quarantine window has passed.
- Rash has subsided, or a physician has provided written notice stating that the rash is not contagious.

Infestation Procedures

The YMCA takes the health and comfort of all youth seriously. If a youth is found to have lice, nits, bed bugs, etc., parents/guardians will be notified, and the youth must be picked up promptly.

Youth may return to programming once they have been treated and are free of lice, nits, bed bugs, etc. Families are encouraged to follow recommended treatment and cleaning guidelines at home to ensure a safe and healthy environment for the entire family.

Staff will complete a lice check before the youth will be permitted to stay at the program.

Pest Management

Each program will have a pest management plan for when pesticide applications should occur in the building (to be done by the school district). The plan will include the following:

- An annual notification will be provided to the parents, informing them that they will receive advance notice of pesticide applications.
- The notifications shall specify two methods by which the advance notice of pesticide application will be given (e-mail, newsletter, sign, etc.).
    - For a school, parents and guardians may review the school's integrated pest management program, if any, and records on any pesticide application procedures.
    - Families may request the name, telephone number, and, if applicable, e-mail address of the person at the school building responsible for pesticide application procedures from the Youth Director.

- The advance notice shall contain information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the program, and a toll-free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.
- Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications may not be performed in a youth program unless the room will be unoccupied by youth for no less than 4 hours or longer, if required by the pesticide label use directions

Meals

Mealtime allows youth the chance to make healthy choices, develop relationships, and practice self-help skills. It is also a time for socializing, using table etiquette, and learning about nutrition and new foods.

The before and after school meal program includes breakfast for the morning program, offered and served through the school districts, and supper (at qualifying locations) or snacks for the afternoon school age program. The menus and portions will follow nutritional guidelines established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The current menu will be posted.

For no school days, the meal program includes breakfast, lunch (provided by families), and 2 snacks.

Food provided by our program will be primarily low-sugar and low-fat in nature. Low-fat (1%) or nonfat milk is served. The program will ask families to refrain from bringing in sugar sweetened beverages (soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, powdered drinks, etc....) or unhealthy foods for lunch, snacks or program events. Water will be available to youth throughout the day and at every meal and snack.

Youth with special dietary needs, such as those with allergies or diet restrictions, will work with the Youth Director to accommodate those needs. All food allergies or dietary restrictions must be documented with a written statement from a doctor or parent/guardian and kept on file. Extreme allergies that may have life-threatening consequences will require a physician-approved action plan, prior to attendance.

All meals and snacks provided by the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids meet USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

Child Nutrition Programs are open to all eligible children and adults regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he/she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity, should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington DC 20250.

Licensing Notebook

Internet access is available at all School Age Program locations. Access to program licensing documents is provided through the MiLEAP Child Care Department's electronic database of licensing records and can be viewed online at: https://www.michigan.gov/mileap.

EMERGENCY AND PREPAREDNESS

YMCA staff will adhere to guidelines, recommendations, and instructions from emergency personnel in all emergency situations, including proper evacuation procedures and safety protocols.

Staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures for the following emergencies.

- Fires
- Tornadoes
- Floods
- Power outages
- Extreme weather conditions
- Bomb threats
- Other natural or man-made emergencies, such as gas leaks or chemical spills and sewer back-ups
- Serious threats or accidents
- Intruders or active shooters

Drills

Each space or room used for the before and after school program has emergency plans, routes, and procedures posted. Fire drills are practiced every other month, and tornado drills are practiced in March and September. All other drills are practiced annually.

Evacuation and Relocation

YMCA before and after school programs maintain a shelter-in place and lockdown plan to keep youth and staff safe inside the building, as well as an on-site evacuation plan, and an off-site evacuation plan. Off-site evacuations will be carried out if directed by a government agency in response to a natural or man-made threat. Families will be informed of the relocation and reunification process by the Youth Director or their designee. A plan for how youth with chronic medical conditions or those who require additional support will be accommodated during an emergency will be implemented as needed.

First Aid Kits

First aid kits are available at each program location and are taken whenever staff leave the program area. Staff follow universal safety precautions when handling bodily fluids, including the use of gloves to protect the health and safety of all participants.

Accident, Injury, Incidents

For minor accidents (e.g., bumps, scrapes) families will be notified no later than the end of the day. In the event of a serious injury (e.g., head injury, excessive bleeding, broken limbs, seizure) parents/guardians will be notified immediately. If a youth requires transportation to the hospital via ambulance before a parent arrives, a staff member will accompany the youth to the hospital and stay with them until a parent or guardian arrives.
Families will be verbally notified within one hour if an incident should occur while their youth is in care of the program. Incidents include, but are not limited to:

- A youth is lost or left unsupervised.
- Alleged sexual contact between youth or between a youth and a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical discipline of a youth by a staff member or volunteer.

STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

Staff

In all staffing decisions, the YMCA strives to hire the most competent and qualified individuals to work with youth. Thorough screening and interviewing procedures are consistently followed. Hiring and promotion decisions are based on staff education and experience working with youth. All program staff are required to:

- Submit to a criminal background check prior to employment, including in- and out-of-state felony and misdemeanor checks, sex offender clearance, and reference checks.
- **Complete the following training:**
  - Bloodborne pathogens training
  - The prevention of abusive head trauma and child maltreatment
  - Recognition, reporting and prevention of child abuse and neglect
  - The prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunizations
  - Administration of Medication
  - Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
  - Youth development and age-appropriate expectations
  - Pediatric first aid and pediatric, infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation training*

*At a minimum, at least one staff member in the program will be certified in CPR and First Aid.

Volunteers

Volunteers, including parents, are always welcome and very much appreciated in YMCA programs. Volunteers are a vital part of the before and after school programs, and their help is greatly appreciated.

All volunteers are required to:

- Submit a criminal background check
- Obtain clearance through the Michigan State Police Sex Offender Registry clearance
- Complete all required training and documentation as required by MiLEAP childcare licensing standards.
- Sign in and out in the volunteer logbook.

MiLEAP Licensing

The YMCA provides youth programs that are regulated by the State of Michigan, and we work closely with the state to provide high-quality care. Our programs are specifically licensed through the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP). This includes interim visits, which review day-to-day operations to ensure compliance, and renewal visits that confirm our ongoing eligibility to maintain licensing. If an incident occurs, or a complaint is received, our sites may be subject to a special investigation visit.

Whenever an incident occurs during program hours, we are required to self-report the information to maintain our commitment to transparency and partnership with the state licensing office. Reportable incidents range in severity from minor situations, such as evacuating a false fire alarm, to more serious or severe injuries or occurrences, such as an injury that requires medical attention. The MiLEAP Licensing

Representative determines whether further investigation is necessary. Such investigations are conducted to review the program's role in the incident and may include contacting families for more information.

Staff Relationships with Families Outside of YMCA Programming

Staff may not be alone with youth they meet in YMCA programs outside of YMCA programs. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, transporting youth to or from programming, attending birthday parties, going to a youth's home, or inviting youth to a staff member's home.

Confidentiality Statement

The YMCA respects families' right to privacy and keeps all information confidential. Information will only be shared with staff, consultants, or agencies when necessary for the youth's safety, or if required by law. Parental consent is needed to share records beyond these individuals, except in cases of suspected youth abuse or neglect.

Child Protection Laws

In accordance with Michigan's Child Protection Law, the YMCA is required to report any suspected cases of abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation to the Department of Human Services. Program staff and volunteers are mandated reporters and must report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

More information on the MiLEAP can be found at https://www.michigan.gov/mileap