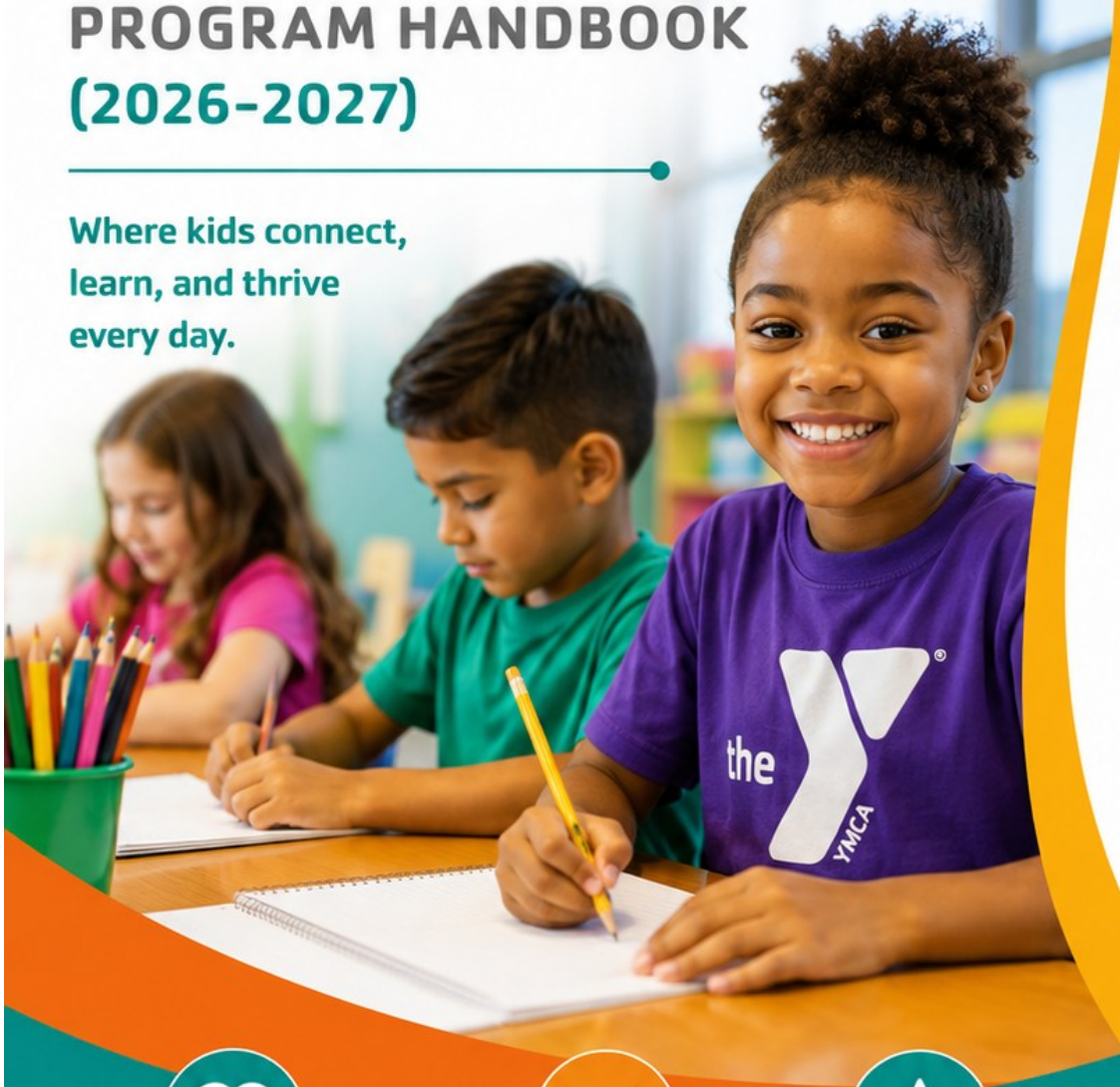
BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL

PROGRAM HANDBOOK (2026-2027)

Where kids connect, learn, and thrive every day.



KNOX COUNTY YMCA

309-344-1324

www.knoxymca.org

BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS

IGNITING CURIOSITY

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE

Parent Quick Start Guide – 2026–2027 YMCA Before & After School Program

Program Information

Program Name	**YMCA Before & After School Program**
School Year	**2026–2027**
AM Program Hours	**6:30am – School Start Time**
PM Program Hours	**School Dismissal – 6:00pm**
Program Days	**Monday – Friday, on full school days only**
Locations	**On-site at participating District 205 Elementary Schools & District 202 Elementary School.**

Registration Fee (One-Time, Per Child)

Registration Fee	**Member Rate: $35**	**Non-Member: $37**

Program Fees (Per Child, Per Day)

Care Type	Member Rate	Non-Member Rate
AM or PM Session	**$7.50 per session**	**$8.50 per session**
Both AM & PM Sessions	**$15.00**	**$17.00**

Key Contacts

Name	Role	Contact Info
George Dredge	**Youth Development Director**	**gdredge@knoxymca.org**
Kylee Yeager	**Sports & Youth Development Director**	**kyeager@knoxymca.org**
Nancy Coleman	**Billing Specialist**	**ncoleman@knoxymca.org**
YMCA Front Desk	**General Info & Payments**	**(309) 344-1324**
Website	**Knox County YMCA**	**www.knoxymca.org**

What's Inside

Page	Topic
3	**Welcome to the YMCA**
4	**Curriculum & Program Overview**
5–7	**Registration, Billing & Attendance**
8–9	**School Site Information**
10	**Health & Safety**
11–12	**Program Expectations & Behavior**
13	**School Out Days & Closures**

WELCOME TO THE YMCA
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Thank you for choosing the Knox County YMCA Before and After School Program!

WHO WE SERVE

The Knox County YMCA Before & After School Program provides safe, engaging care for children attending Galesburg School District #205 and Knoxville School District #202. We create opportunities for children to build friendships, develop confidence, complete homework, stay active, and have fun in a supportive environment.

KNOX COUNTY YMCA BRANCHES

Knox County YMCA Family Branch
1324 W Carl Sandburg Dr. Galesburg

Downtown Galesburg YMCA
201 E Main St. Galesburg

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

WHO WE ARE

The YMCA is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors that is made up of concerned and interested local community leaders. The Y is supported solely by those who choose to join and take part in the many programs offered as well as those who choose to make voluntary contributions.

OUR COMMITMENT

At the Y, we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. That's why we offer financial assistance to families who need help paying for membership or programs. Our Annual Support Campaign raises money for financial assistance to ensure that nobody is turned away due to an inability to pay. Please ask for an application at the Member Service Desk to apply for financial assistance. If you wish to donate, please check our website at www.knoxymca.org.

DCFS LICENSING

The Facility and Before & After School Program is not licensed or regulated by the Department of Children and Family Services.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Knox County YMCA recognizes the worth of all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age or economic circumstances.

OUR CORE VALUES

Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility

OUR CURRICULUM

Before and After incorporates the following components as a way to intentionally foster holistic youth development through a range of activities focused on helping youth achieve goals, build relationships and feel like they belong.

Homework Help – We offer dedicated daily homework time. Our program is not a tutoring program. We provide at least 30 minutes of focused, quiet time for students to work on homework or other academically based work. Our staff will do their best to work with the schools and teachers to help ensure we are committed to the 30 minutes each day to be spent on homework completion.

Our staff provide a quiet, supervised environment for homework and are available to offer guidance and encouragement. While we support homework completion, the YMCA is not a tutoring program.

Health and Wellness – The Knox County YMCA promotes physical activity every day. We ensure that they get 30 minutes of exercise each day and will take place outdoors whenever possible. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Art Projects – We focus on clear learning objectives that engage youth in planning, implementation and briefing through fun, creative and sometimes messy projects.

Typical Daily Schedule– Each site strives to follow the daily schedule.

The schedule is intentionally planned to support reaching the Before and After School Programs outcomes.

Arrival (5-10 minutes)

Homework Enrichment (30-40 minutes)

Snack (15-20 minutes)

Physical Activity (30 minutes)

OUR LEADERSHIP

Each of our sites has two YMCA Staff dedicated to your child's Before and After School Program. They are your primary contact for information about our programs or any questions you may have. We encourage and invite parental participation and communication. All programs have an open door policy and we hope you take an active role in your child's day.

OUR STAFF

Our staff receives hours of professional training that meets Illinois Childcare Resource and Referral requirements. All sites have staff who are CPR and First Aid certified. Background checks are performed on all YMCA staff. Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside the YMCA program. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and/or inviting children to their homes. Any exceptions are required a written explanation before the fact and are subject to prior administrator approval.

This facility engages and complies with the background check and clearance procedure through Illinois Department of Human Services CCAP currently available for license exempt CCAP providers.

Special Needs and Inclusion

The YMCA shall accept into the program all children who are able to participate within the regular activities and guidelines as part of a group with a ratio of 20 children to 1 staff. The YMCA will not exclude any child with a disability from the full and equal enjoyment of its services, unless the child poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the program.

In accordance with the requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and applicable state disability law, the YMCA will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability. The YMCA will consider reasonable accommodations and/or modifications to its policies and procedures as necessary to allow children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in this program, unless the accommodations or modifications would pose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the program.

REGISTRATION

The Before and After School Program is available for all students for K-6th grade. Please register online at www.knoxymca.org. If you're unable to register online, registration must be done in person at the Front Desk. There is a non refundable registration fee per school year per child. Registration fees must be paid prior to your child attending YMCA Before and After School sessions. All balances from previous years must be paid in full before being allowed to register.

Registration Fee: Member Rate: $35 Non-Member Rate: $37

Daily Rates:

Member Rate:	$7.50 per a.m. session (6:30am until school starts)
	$7.50 per p.m. session (after school until 6:00pm)
Non-Member Rate:	$8.50 per a.m. session (6:30am until school starts)
	$8.50 per p.m. session (after school until 6:00pm)

Payments

The YMCA Before and After School Program only accepts auto-draft. Participants must have billing on file at all times. If you choose to use a credit card, a 3% processing fee will be applied to each charge (this does not apply to debit cards). **Payments will be deducted bi-weekly on Fridays (see payment schedule on next page).** Should any debit not be honored by your bank or credit card company for any reason, you will be responsible for the payment and an additional returned payment fee that will be applied by the YMCA. This will be in addition to any service fee your credit card company or bank may require. Each account will be assigned one primary payer – we can not split accounts between two or more payers. Payments are due on the due date regardless of court ordered custody, child support or payment agreements.

The following methods of payment are accepted:

- Bank Draft — This is the preferred method of payment as outlined above.
- Credit Card — A 3% fee will be added to your payment (this does not apply to debit cards).

Invoices

To better serve you, invoices are sent via email before the draft. This is to help with any confusion about payments. Please make sure we have your correct email.

Receipts

Please log onto our website www.knoxymca.org to obtain a receipt for your transaction.

Payment Draft Schedule

Draft Date	Days Drafted	School Breaks
August 28th	August 12th – August 21st	Galesburg 1st Day of School August 12th Knoxville 1st Day of School August 12th
September 11th	August 24th – September 4th	
September 25th	September 8th – September 18th	No School September 7th (Labor Day)
October 9th	September 21st – October 2nd	
October 23rd	October 5th – October 16th	Galesburg No School October 9th (Teacher's Institute) Knoxville No School October 9th (Teacher's Institute) Galesburg No School October 12th – 16th (Fall Break) Knoxville No School October 14th – 16th (Fall Break)
November 6th	October 19th – October 30th	Knoxville No School October 30th (Parent/Teacher Conference)
November 20th	November 2nd – November 13th	Galesburg No School November 3rd (Election Day) No School November 11th (Veterans Day)
December 4th	November 16th – November 27th	Galesburg No School November 25th–27th (Thanksgiving Break) Knoxville No School November 25th–27th (Thanksgiving Break)
December 18th	November 30th – December 11th	
January 1st (or next business day)	December 14th – December 25th	Galesburg No School December 21st–January 1st (Winter Break) Knoxville No School December 21st–January 1st (Winter Break)
January 15th	December 28th – January 8th	Knoxville No School January 4th (Teacher's Institute)
January 29th	January 11th – January 22nd	No School January 18th (Martin Luther King Jr Day)
February 12th	January 25th – February 5th	
February 26th	February 8th – February 19th	No School February 15th (Presidents Day)
March 12th	February 22nd – March 5th	
March 26th	March 8th – March 19th	
April 9th	March 22nd – April 2nd	Galesburg No School March 26th–April 2nd (Spring Break) Knoxville No School March 26th–April 2nd (Spring Break)
April 23rd	April 5th – April 16th	No School April 3rd & 6th (Easter Break)
May 7th	April 19th – April 30th	
May 21st	May 3rd – May 14th	
June 4th	May 17th until the end of school	Galesburg Last Day of School May 21st Knoxville Last Day of School May 21st

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Payment Info

In situations that require parents to make co-payments, these will be debited out on the 15th of the month. If you are approved after the 15th of the month then copays will be debited out on the 1st of the month following your approval for all backdated payments. If you have not paid your month's copay by the end of the month, your child will be dismissed from the program until payment is made.

The parent is responsible for 50% of the daily session fees until approval is received into a subsidy program. This will be debited from your account according to the schedule above. If you are approved for a subsidy, the amount paid will be returned minus the copay due.

Financial Assistance

The YMCA is committed to providing quality programs to all children and families regardless of their financial circumstances. The YMCA strives not to turn anyone away due to the inability to pay and offers financial assistance through our Annual Support Campaign. We do ask that families apply to Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) through the State of Illinois before applying for the Y scholarship program. Participants can get an application from the Y. Once the application is filled out and proof of employment or school is provided, the Y will mail your application in. It may take up to 30 days for approval, during this time you are responsible for 50% of the fees until approved. If you are approved the fees paid will be applied to your CCR&R copay. If you are not approved for CCR&R, you may meet with the Program Director to apply for a scholarship.

Please visit the Y in person to register. The registration fee will be subsidized to $5 per child.

Tax Statements and FLEX Reimbursement

Tax statements will be available starting February 1st. Your childcare expense may be tax deductible. The tax ID of your caregiver is required on your tax forms each year. The Knox County YMCA's tax ID number is 37-0661260.

ATTENDANCE AND PICK UP

For your child's safety, a parent or authorized adult must escort their child into the program each morning and sign them in. Children must also be signed out by a parent or authorized adult at pick-up. The YMCA is responsible for your child only while they are signed into the program.

Children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized pick-up contacts on the registration form. If a different person will be picking up your child, the YMCA must receive written notification before pick-up. For the safety of all children, photo identification may be requested before a child is released.

Late Policy

Children must be picked up from the program by 6pm. Late charges begin accruing at 6:01 p.m. and are $1 per child per minute late. Late charges are due when picking up your child and will be automatically drafted using the account on file.

If a child is not picked up by 6:15pm, we will begin contacting emergency contacts. If we cannot reach anyone on the contact sheet by 6:30pm, we will notify law enforcement and contact DCFS.

If three late pickups occur, your child may be dismissed from the YMCA Before and After School Program.

Contact Information Changes

If you experience a change of address, phone number or email, please submit your changes in writing to the YMCA as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency, it is critical that we are able to reach you.

Concerns for Safety

Safety is our number one priority. If we have reason for concern regarding the safety of a child's release to a parent or other adult, we may call the police. Cause for this course of action includes:

- Parent/adult suspected to be "under the influence."
- Parent/adult is abusive or threatening to the child, our staff, or any other persons present.
- If there is a concern for the safety of our program participants, please contact the YMCA AT 309-344-1324 .

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL SITES

Lombard Middle School– Galesburg

- We only offer After School for this site and it is held at the school.
- This program is for 5th and 6th graders.
- Depending on the time, please try the cafeteria doors, and use the doorbell. **If it's after 4:30pm please try the gym doors.**
- Staff will sign kids in on the iPad. You will have to come into the building at the end of the day to sign them out.
- When the weather is nice the staff may take the kids to use the playground. There will be a note on the door to let you know if they are outside. Please go around the building to get your child from the playground. They will still need to be signed out.

King School – Galesburg

- Before and After School for this site is held at the school.
- This program is for K-4th graders.
- In the mornings, please use the gym doors located on the north side of the building. Please use the YMCA doorbell to be let into the building.
- In the afternoons, depending on the time, please try the cafeteria doors and use the doorbell. If it's after 4:30pm and they aren't in the cafeteria, try the playground.
- You will need to bring your child into the building to be sign in. You will also have to come into the building at the end of the day to sign them out.
- When the weather is nice the staff may take the kids to use the playground. There will be a note on the door to let you know if they are outside. Please go around the building to get your child from the playground. They will still need to be signed out.

Silas Willard – Galesburg

- Before and After School for this site is held at the school.
- This program is for K-4th graders.
- Please drop off at door 8, by the car lane (located on Fifer St), then enter the cafeteria to sign in.
- You will need to bring your child into the building to be sign in. You will also have to come into the building at the end of the day to sign them out.
- When the weather is nice the staff may take the kids to use the playground. There will be a note on the door to let you know if they are outside. Please go around the building to get your child from the playground. They will still need to be signed out.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL SITES CONT'D

Steele School – Galesburg

- Before and After School for this site is held at the school.
- This program is for K-4th graders.
- Please use the cafeteria doors located on the west side of the building, which face McClure St. Please use the YMCA doorbell to be let into the building.
- You will need to bring your child into the building to be sign in. You will also have to come into the building at the end of the day to sign them out.
- When the weather is nice the staff may take the kids to use the playground. There will be a note on the door to let you know if they are outside. Please go around the building to get your child from the playground. They will still need to be signed out.

Mable Woolsey – Knoxville

- Before and After School for this site is held at the school.
- This program is for K-6th graders.
- Please use the doors at the back of the building where you enter the cafeteria. Please use the YMCA doorbell to be let into the building by the YMCA staff.
- You will need to bring your child into the building to be signed in. You will also have to come into the building at the end of the day to sign them out.
- When the weather is nice the staff may take the kids to use the playground. There will be a note on the door to let you know if they are outside. Please go to the playground to pick them up. They will still need to be signed out.
- 5th and 6th grade students will need to walk from the Junior High School to the Grade School to use our services. If you know your child will be walking over please let the school and the Y know.

SCHOOL HOURS FOR BOTH DISTRICTS

SCHOOL NAME	REGULAR SCHEDULE	1 HOUR EARLY	2 HOUR EARLY	1 HOUR DELAYED START
Lombard Middle School	7:55am to 2:40pm	1:40pm	12:40pm	9am
King Elementary	9am to 3:45pm	2:45pm	1:45pm	10am
Silas Willard Elementary	9am to 3:45pm	2:45pm	1:45pm	10am
Steele Elementary	9am to 3:45pm	2:45pm	1:45pm	10am
Mable Woolsey	8:15am to 2:55pm	1:55pm	12:55pm	NA

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness

If your child becomes ill while in program, he/she will be isolated from the other children and you will be contacted to pick him/her up. The YMCA is not equipped to handle ill children beyond securing their immediate comfort. Pick up by an authorized personal shall be within 30 minutes. The YMCA does not provide health or accident insurance for any of its program participants.

Lice

In the event that your child has live lice while at the site, we will call you to pick up your child within 30 minutes. Children may return if there are no live nits present after 24 hours.

Soiled Pants

Our staff is not equipped to change soiled pants. If your child has had an accident in his/her pants the parents will be called and they must come to the site and change their child's pants. If this occurs three times your child will be dismissed from the Before and After School Program.

Medication

If your child is required to take a medication during program, a written medication consent must be completed by the child's physician or parent prior to starting program. We also are required to have the medication in the original box with the original prescription label. Medication forms and medications must match exactly and be provided prior to the start date of the program. All medicines will be stored in a lock box.

Medical Emergencies

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff member in charge will take all steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted. In the event of a serious medical emergency, staff will provide first aid, contact parent/guardian immediately, contact emergency contacts if necessary and call 911.

Child Abuse Prevention

All YMCA staff are mandated reporters and required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to DCFS.

Nutrition

The Knox County YMCA provides nutritious snacks that meet USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Children are offered all required meal components; however, they are not required to eat every item that is served. Unopened, eligible food items that a child chooses not to eat may be placed on the designated share table in accordance with CACFP requirements and local health department guidelines.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Emergency Drills

Each program will conduct a monthly evacuation drill, along with semi-annual shelter-in-place drills. Drop-off and pick-up during these drills are restricted. In the event a situation arises that is not a drill, families will be notified immediately of any change in location or situation.

No Handguns

Guns are not allowed at the Before and After School Program or School Out Program. Signs are posted at the schools' front entrances and at the front door of the Knox County YMCA.

Attire

Children participate in outdoor play whenever weather permits. Please send your child in weather-appropriate clothing and closed-toe athletic shoes each day.

HOMEWORK

Each day during after school care, children are provided an opportunity to complete schoolwork. Our staff provide a quiet, supervised environment for homework and are available to offer guidance and encouragement. While we support homework completion, the YMCA is not a tutoring program. If desired, please encourage or impress upon your child that homework must get done during program hours. You are welcome to send your child with a list of expected tasks. Our staff will encourage your child in accomplishing this. If in a school setting, YMCA staff are not permitted to escort children back to their classroom during the program time to pick up left items.

TOYS AND ITEMS FROM HOME

Toys or other items from home are not permitted, unless it is a part of your child's specific learning or behavior plan. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items brought to the School Age Child Care Program. Please connect with your site director if your child requires a comfort item or fidget to be successful in program.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Participants in our program may bring electronic devices including Chromebooks, iPads, or Kindles to complete schoolwork. Cell phones, iPods, or gaming devices are highly discouraged; however, if they bring it to program, the device must be turned off and stored away. If your child is in need of a specific device per a physician, please contact the Program Director.
Please be sure any devices needed for schoolwork are fully charged. Your child is solely responsible for the storage and safekeeping of all devices. The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our goal is to teach positive behavior through encouragement, clear expectations, and respectful communication while helping children develop problem-solving and self-regulation skills. This models our 4 core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Using those values, we require both staff and participants to choose behaviors that align with safe, respectful childcare.

- Staff will be proactive in preventing negative behaviors.
- Staff will address the behaviors in a calm manner and redirect the child to a more positive behavior.
- Staff will discuss the occurrence and strategies implemented with parents at pick up.
- If behaviors continue, staff will complete a behavior report with the child to encourage alternate strategies for a better outcome. Staff will share this with the parents.
- Each behavior report will specify the negative behavior, specify how staff redirected the behavior, and will note possible future consequences.
- If behavior continues, the child will be suspended for a minimum of 1 day.
- If behavior continues, the child may be suspended for up to 1 month and the parent must meet with the Program Director prior to the child returning to the program to discuss an action plan.
- If behavior continues, the child may be terminated from the program and all other Y programs for 12 months. After 12 months, the child may be re-enrolled with a 3 month probationary period.
- The Program Director or designee reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend a participant for repeated violations for the rules without refund.

CONDUCT POLICY

Please make sure both you and your child are completely familiar with these policies. The Program Director may suspend or terminate a child's participation in the program for the following reasons:

- Leaving the Before and After School Program premises without permission.
- Using foul or offensive language. Behavior that is not respectful to other participants, staff, or other school/YMCA personnel will not be tolerated.
- Defacing YMCA property, vehicles, or school facilities.
- Engaging in physical or verbal fighting as the means to solve a problem.
- Stealing or defacing another participant's property.
- Intentionally injuring or harming another participant, staff, or school/YMCA personnel.
- Refusing to stay with the group during outings or on the property.
- Refusing to follow check in and out procedures.
- Refusing to follow the basic rules of the program.
- Sexual harassment of any kind to another participant, staff, or school/YMCA personnel.
- Any conduct that puts the safety of the child, other participants, staff, or program at risk.

ENDING CARE

We reserve the right to end your child's enrollment for the following reasons:

- If you pick up your child after the program closes more than three times.
- If you have three returned payments.
- If there are consistent disciplinary occurrences with your child that put other children or program staff at risk physically and/or emotionally.
- If parent/guardian is abusive or threatening to staff or program participants.

FAMILY/CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT

Parent support is critical to the success of the program. We have an open door policy and our families are encouraged to visit our program at any time. Please be respectful of the children's routines and program activities, as well as our staff's need to be with the children. We encourage you to schedule a time with your Site Coordinator/Director to discuss your child's progress.

TRANSPORTATION

YMCA staff are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles.

NO SCHOOL – NO PROBLEM

School Out Days are available for an additional fee on most days off from school. We use the Galesburg School District #205 calendar, to determine School Out Days. School Out Days must be registered for separately from Before & After. The registration fee must be paid in full at time of registration. This program is offered at the Knox County YMCA Family Branch.

Cost: Member & Non-Member: $33 per day

Early Dismissal

Our staff will be at schools on scheduled and unscheduled early outs. If school does not open in the morning due to bad weather, there will be no childcare. If school closes early during a regular school day, we will be there to care for the children, **as long as they have been served lunch.** If school is dismissed **before** lunchtime, there will be no childcare available. When there is bad weather, we ask that your child be picked up as soon as possible.

Late Start

Late starts are determined by Galesburg School District #205. If there is a late start, the school should notify you by phone or you can listen to the radio for information. We will offer the program on late start days. It will be the normal rate for a late session.

Snow Days

If a snow day is called by Galesburg School District #205, we will have School Out Days at the YMCA Family Branch. This will be available to all students. Students will need to bring their own lunches.

Cost: Member & Non-Member: $33 per day

What To Bring On School Out Days or Snow Day

Your child will need a bagged lunch, sneakers, a water bottle, and weather appropriate clothing. School Out Day offers swim time during their program. Please pack a bathing suit and towel in a separate bag, if your child chooses to swim. Please label everything!

Program Holiday Closures

The YMCA School Age program runs from the first day or school until the last day of school. Child care is NOT available on the following days: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter and Memorial Day.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL POLICIES WITH YOUR FAMILY AND ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS WITH YOUR SITE DIRECTOR. ALL POLICIES IN THIS HANDBOOK ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE YMCA.