



175 YEAR
ANNIVERSARY

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Parent Handbook

Before & After School Care



**HEALTHY
SNACK**



**HOMEWORK
HELP**



**PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



**INTEREST
CENTERS**



**ENRICHMENT
PROGRAMMING**



**ACADEMIC
ALIGNMENT**

WEST MORRIS AREA YMCA

West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Programs Parent Handbook

Welcome to the West Morris Area YMCA

Dear Families,

Welcome to the West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Programs! We are honored that you have chosen us to be part of your child's day. Our dedicated team is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children can learn, build friendships, discover new interests, and grow in confidence.

Our program is designed to be an extension of the school day by offering a balance of homework support, hands-on activities, creative arts, physical fitness, outdoor play, STEM experiences, and opportunities to develop important social and emotional skills. Every child is welcomed with respect, encouragement, and the opportunity to succeed.

We believe the strongest programs are built through a partnership between families, schools, and YMCA staff. Open communication, mutual respect, and shared expectations help create a positive experience for every child. We encourage you to stay connected through GroupMe, emails, newsletters, and conversations with our staff.

This handbook has been developed to answer common questions and provide important information regarding our policies, procedures, and daily operations. Please review it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the school year. If you ever have questions, concerns, or suggestions, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you.

Thank you for trusting the West Morris Area YMCA with your family. We look forward to an exciting school year filled with learning, laughter, friendships, and memorable experiences.

Our Mission

The YMCA is dedicated to strengthening our community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Our Before & After School Programs provide a safe, inclusive, and enriching environment where every child can thrive.

Our Commitment to Families

- **Provide a safe, licensed, and caring environment**
- **Treat every child with dignity, respect, and inclusion**
- **Maintain open and timely communication with families**
- **Promote positive behavior through encouragement and guidance**
- **Support children's academic, social, emotional, and physical development**
- **Partner with families and schools to ensure every child has a successful experience**

DEPARTMENT	CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE
Senior Youth Services Director	Jennifer Patrick	jennifer@wmaymca.org	973 366 1120 ext. 5057
School Programs- Finance	Debbie Popek	debbie@wmaymca.org	973 366 1120 ext. 5058
Website	www.wmaymca.org	-	-
Primary Family Communication	GroupMe App	-	-

Section 2 Communication with Families

The West Morris Area YMCA values open, respectful, and timely communication with families. We believe that strong partnerships between families, schools, and YMCA staff create the best possible experience for every child.

Our Commitment

- Communicate important program information promptly
- Respond to parent questions and concerns professionally
- Provide updates regarding illnesses, injuries, or emergencies
- Maintain confidentiality regarding children and families

Primary Methods of Communication

Method	Purpose
GroupMe	Primary source for urgent alerts, reminders, schedule changes, and program updates
Email	Weekly newsletters, forms, announcements, and general communication
Phone Calls	Urgent situations involving a child, illness, injury, or emergencies
Flyer	Special events, registration information, and family programs

Parent Responsibilities

- Download the GroupMe app and enable notifications
- Maintain current phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, and authorized pick-up information
- Notify the YMCA promptly of absences, schedule changes, or changes in custody arrangements
- Review weekly newsletters and program communications

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns with the Site Director at any time. If additional support is needed, a conference may be scheduled with the Site Director, Sr. Youth Services Director, and/or Youth Services Coordinator to develop a collaborative plan.

Visitor Policy

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the program during operating hours. All visitors must sign in and follow YMCA and school security procedures. Individuals providing presentations or services to children must meet all applicable YMCA and New Jersey Office of Licensing background screening requirements.

Emergency Notifications

In the event of an emergency, significant illness, injury, building issue, weather-related change, or other urgent matter, families will be notified as quickly as possible using the most appropriate communication method available.

Contact Information

Questions regarding registration, billing, or program policies should be directed to the appropriate YMCA staff member. Current contact information for program sites and administrative staff is provided in the handbook directory.

Section 3

Program Operations

The West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Programs are designed to provide a safe, consistent, and enriching extension of the school day. The following information explains how the program operates throughout the school year.

Program Schedule

The Before & After School Program begins on the first day of school and concludes on the last scheduled day of the school year. Program hours vary by school location and dismissal times.

Attendance

- Children are expected to attend on their registered schedule
- Parents should notify the YMCA whenever a child will be absent
- Attendance is verified daily to ensure every registered child is safely accounted for

School Status	YMCA Program
Delayed Opening	No Before Care
Early Dismissal (Emergency)	No After Care
School Closed	No Before or After Care
Scheduled Early Dismissal	After care is provided unless otherwise announced

School's Out Full-Day Programs

On many scheduled school holidays and breaks, the YMCA offers School's Out programs at the West Morris Area YMCA, subject to minimum enrollment. Program hours are generally 8:00 AM–6:00 PM.

- Children must be signed in and out by an authorized adult
- Please send a non-perishable lunch, snacks, a refillable water bottle, and weather-appropriate clothing
- Swimming and special activities may be scheduled; families will receive advance information

Schedule Changes & Withdrawals

One schedule change is permitted at no charge during the school year. Additional schedule changes will incur a \$25 administrative fee for each change request. Requests to change schedules or withdraw from the program must be submitted in writing via email to debbie@wmaymca.org (Debbie Popek) with at least two weeks' notice.

Inclement Weather & Emergencies

If weather or other emergency conditions develop while the program is operating, children will remain supervised in a safe location until they are picked up or normal dismissal procedures can resume. Families will receive updates as conditions change.

Section 4

Arrival & Departure Procedures

The safety of every child is our highest priority. The following procedures are designed to ensure that every participant arrives safely, is properly supervised, and is released only to authorized individuals.

Arrival Procedures

- Children attending Before Care will be signed in by a parent or authorized adult.
- Children arriving for After School are checked into the YMCA program according to each school's dismissal procedures.
- Attendance is verified immediately to ensure all expected participants are accounted for.

Authorized Pick-Up

Children may only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or another individual listed on the child's authorized pick-up form. Photo identification may be requested at any time before a child is released.

Sign-Out Requirements

- An authorized adult must sign the child out each day.
- Children may never leave the program without staff knowledge and proper sign-out procedures.
- Changes to authorized pick-up persons must be submitted to the YMCA in advance whenever possible.

Extra-Curricular Activities

If a child participates in an extra-curricular activity held within the school building during YMCA program hours (Scouts, enrichment classes, clubs, etc.), the child must be signed out of the YMCA by an authorized adult and personally escorted to the activity.

YMCA staff do not escort children to or from extra-curricular activities.

- If returning to the YMCA after the activity, the child must be signed back into the program by an authorized adult.
- If leaving for the remainder of the day, the child must remain with the authorized adult.
- Children signed out for appointments or off-site activities may not return to the YMCA program that day.
- Families may submit one written notice listing recurring activity dates and times.

Late Pick-Up

The program closes promptly at 6:00 PM. Children must be picked up no later than closing time.

Policy	Requirement
Closing Time	6:00 PM
Late Fee	\$2.00 per minute after 6:00 pm
Repeated Late Pick Up	Three or more pickups may result in program review or suspension

Emergency Pick-Up

If a parent is delayed due to an emergency, the YMCA should be notified immediately. Staff will attempt to contact the parent and authorized emergency contacts. If a child remains after closing and no authorized adult can be reached, the YMCA will follow New Jersey Office of Licensing procedures.

Section 5

Health & Safety

The health, safety, and well-being of every child is the West Morris Area YMCA's highest priority. Our programs follow all New Jersey Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing requirements and YMCA policies to provide a safe and healthy environment for every participant.

Health History Forms

Every child must have a completed YMCA Health History Form and all required enrollment paperwork on file before attending the program. Families are responsible for keeping all medical and emergency information current throughout the school year.

Illness Policy

Children who are ill should remain at home to protect the health of others. If a child becomes ill while attending the program, they will be separated from the group and a parent or authorized emergency contact will be contacted for immediate pick-up.

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Children Should Remain Home if They Have:	
Fever	100.4 or higher
Vomiting or Diarrhea	Within the previous 24 hours
Contagious Illness	Pink Eye, Strep Throat, Chicken Pox, etc.
Persistent Symptoms	Severe cough, rash, difficulty breathing, lethargy

Children may return when symptom-free for at least 24 hours or with written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider when appropriate.

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home. When medication must be given during program hours, the following requirements apply:

- Prescription medication must be in its original pharmacy-labeled container
- A completed YMCA Medication Authorization Form and a physician's order are required
- Emergency medications (EpiPens, inhalers, seizure medications, etc.) must remain at the program
- Medication may only be administered by trained YMCA staff in accordance with YMCA policy

Accidents & Injuries

Minor first aid will be provided by trained staff as needed. Parents will be notified of all head, neck, facial, bite, or significant injuries. Accident/Incident Reports will be completed whenever required.

Communicable Diseases

The YMCA follows all New Jersey Department of Health reporting requirements for communicable diseases. Families will be notified when reportable illnesses may have exposed other participants while maintaining confidentiality.

Children with Special Needs

The YMCA welcomes children of all abilities and provides reasonable accommodations whenever possible. Families are encouraged to meet with YMCA staff before the first day of attendance to discuss any medical, behavioral, or developmental needs that will help ensure a successful experience.

Emergency Procedures

- Emergency drills are conducted regularly
- Staff are trained in emergency response procedures
- Emergency contact information must remain current
- Parents will be notified as quickly as possible during emergencies

Health & Safety Commitment

Together, families and YMCA staff play an important role in maintaining a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment for every child. Your cooperation with these policies helps us provide the highest quality care each day.

Section 6 Behavior Guidance & Positive Discipline

The West Morris Area YMCA believes every child deserves a safe, supportive, and respectful environment. Our approach to behavior guidance emphasizes teaching appropriate behaviors, building positive relationships, and helping children develop self-control, responsibility, and respect for others.

Our Philosophy

- Treat every child with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Focus on teaching positive behaviors rather than simply correcting negative ones.
- Recognize and reinforce appropriate choices.
- Partner with families to encourage consistent expectations.

Positive Behavior Strategies

- Clear expectations and program rules.
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Redirection to appropriate activities.
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving.
- Age-appropriate consequences that are fair and consistent.

Step	Action
1	Staff redirect behavior and review expectations.
2	Child is given time to regain self-control in a supervised area.
3	Site Director becomes involved if behavior continues.
4	Parent is notified and a conference may be scheduled.
5	Behavior Support Plan may be developed when appropriate.
6	Suspension or expulsion may be considered when safety or repeated serious behavior warrants.

Prohibited Forms of Discipline

The YMCA strictly prohibits any form of corporal punishment or abusive discipline. Staff may never:

- Hit, shake, or physically punish a child
- Use humiliation, ridicule, threats, or abusive language
- Withhold food, water, rest, or bathroom access
- Require excessive physical exercise as punishment
- Isolate a child without supervision

Behavior Documentation

Significant behavioral incidents will be documented using YMCA incident or behavioral management forms. Parents will be informed of incidents requiring documentation, and conferences may be scheduled to develop strategies for success.

Suspension & Expulsion

The YMCA is committed to working with families to resolve behavioral concerns whenever possible. However, suspension or dismissal may be necessary when a child's behavior presents a safety risk, seriously disrupts the program, or when a parent or guardian violates YMCA policies. Decisions are made in accordance with YMCA policy and New Jersey Office of Licensing requirements.

Family Partnership

Families are valued partners in supporting children's success. Open communication between parents, school personnel, and YMCA staff helps create consistent expectations and positive outcomes for every participant.

Section 7 Daily Program Expectations

The West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Program provides a structured, engaging, and respectful environment where children are encouraged to learn, play, and grow. The following expectations help ensure a positive experience for all participants.

Dress for Success

- Children should wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing each day
- Sneakers or other closed-toe shoes are required for indoor and outdoor activities
- Please send coats, hats, and gloves during cold weather, as outdoor play is scheduled whenever conditions permit

Personal Belongings

To prevent loss or damage, please label all personal belongings with your child's name.

- The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items
- Items that may distract from the program should remain at home unless requested for a special activity

Electronics & Personal Devices

Cell phones, smart watches, tablets, handheld gaming systems, trading cards, toys, and other valuables should remain at home unless approved by the Site Director.

If a child brings an electronic device, it must remain stored away during program hours unless permission has been granted for educational purposes.

Homework & Enrichment

When time and space permit, children may work on homework during the program. While staff encourage and support homework completion, they cannot guarantee that all assignments will be finished.

- Homework support is available when staffing and schedules allow
- Children are encouraged to participate in enrichment activities after completing homework
- Learning opportunities include STEM, arts and crafts, literacy, games, physical activity, and social development

Outdoor Play & Physical Activity

Outdoor play is an important part of every child's day. Children participate in outdoor activities whenever weather and safety conditions permit.

- Please send appropriate clothing for the season
- Water bottles are encouraged every day
- Activities are modified during periods of extreme heat, cold, or severe weather

Respect for Others

- Use kind and respectful language
- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Care for YMCA, school, and personal property
- Follow staff directions the first time they are given
- Include others and demonstrate the YMCA Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility

Our Goal

Every activity is designed to help children build confidence, develop friendships, and have fun in a safe and supportive environment. We appreciate the partnership of our families in reinforcing these expectations at home.

Section 8

Tuition, Billing & Financial Policies

The West Morris Area YMCA is committed to providing high-quality, affordable before and after school care. The following policies help ensure the financial sustainability of our programs while providing families with clear expectations regarding tuition and billing.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is automatically drafted from the payment method on file on the first (1st) day of each month. Families are responsible for maintaining a valid payment method throughout the school year.

Accepted Payment Methods

- Checking Account (ACH) – Preferred
- Debit Card
- Credit Card
 - To avoid credit card processing fees, families are encouraged to use a checking account or debit card whenever possible.

Returned Payments

Returned or declined payments will result in additional processing fees (currently \$35 per returned contact transaction). Outstanding balances must be resolved promptly to avoid interruption of program services.

Schedule Changes

Request	Policy
First Schedule Change	No Charge
Additional Schedule Change	\$25 Administrative Fee per change
Notice Required	Written request submitted to the School Programs Office

Program Withdrawal

Families wishing to withdraw from the Before & After School Program must provide written notice at least two (2) weeks before the child's final day of attendance. Written notice should be sent to the School Programs Office.

Financial Assistance

The West Morris Area YMCA believes every child should have access to quality programs regardless of financial circumstances.

- YMCA Financial Assistance is available for qualifying families.
- Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) subsidy programs may also be accepted when applicable.
- Families interested in assistance should contact the School Programs Office via email (debbie@wmaymca.org) for additional information.

Questions About Your Account

Questions regarding registration, billing, tuition payments, payment plans, or financial assistance should be directed to the YMCA School Programs Finance Office.

Our Commitment

Our goal is to work collaboratively with families whenever financial concerns arise. Please contact us as soon as possible if you experience circumstances that may affect your ability to make timely tuition payments.

Section 9 Parent Responsibilities

A successful Before & After School Program depends on a strong partnership between families, schools, and YMCA staff. Parents and guardians play an important role in helping us provide a safe, positive, and enriching experience for every child.

Enrollment Responsibilities

- Complete all required registration forms before your child's first day
- Maintain current emergency contacts, phone numbers, email addresses, and authorized pick-up information
- Immediately notify the YMCA of any custody changes and provide court documentation when applicable
- Keep all medical information and allergy information current

Daily Responsibilities

- Notify the YMCA if your child will be absent or if their schedule changes
- Sign your child in and out when required
- Ensure your child is picked up by an authorized adult before the program closing
- Send your child dressed appropriately for indoor and outdoor activities
- Provide any required medications, lunches, snacks, or personal items as applicable

Communication Expectations

Families are expected to review program communications regularly and maintain open communication with YMCA staff.

Please remember to:	Why It Matters:
Enable GroupMe Notifications	Receive important alerts and emergency updates
Read Weekly Newsletters	Stay informed about activities, reminders, and events
Respond Promptly to Staff	Helps us meet your child's needs efficiently
Update Contact Information	Ensures we can reach you in an emergency

Partnering for Success

We ask families to support YMCA behavior expectations by reinforcing respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring at home. Working together helps children experience consistent expectations and positive outcomes.

Questions or Concerns

If you have a question or concern, please contact your Site Director first. If additional assistance is needed, the Sr. Youth Services Director or the School Programs Office is available to help. We value respectful communication and are committed to resolving concerns collaboratively.

Thank You

Thank you for partnering with the West Morris Area YMCA. Your support and involvement help us create a welcoming, safe, and engaging environment where every child can learn, grow, and thrive.

Section 10 New Jersey Office of Licensing Information

The West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Programs are licensed by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (OOL). As a licensed child care provider, the YMCA complies with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52) and all applicable state and federal regulations.

Your Rights as a Parent

- Visit the program at any time while it is in operation.
- Review the program's current child care license.
- Review the Office of Licensing inspection and complaint investigation reports.
- Discuss questions or concerns regarding program policies with YMCA staff.
- Receive advance notice and provide consent for field trips and off-site activities.
- Expect reasonable accommodations in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

Reporting Concerns

Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns directly with the YMCA whenever possible. If you believe a licensing requirement has been violated or have concerns regarding the health, safety, or welfare of children, you may contact the New Jersey Office of Licensing

Agency	Contact Information
NJ Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing	1-877-667-9845
State Central Registry (Child Abuse Hotline)	1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)
NJ Child Care Explorer	https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/

Child Abuse Reporting

New Jersey law requires any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected to immediately report those concerns to the State Central Registry Hotline. Reports may be made anonymously.

Program Licensing

A copy of the YMCA's current child care license is posted at each program site. The complete Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers is available for parent review upon request.

Office of Licensing Information to Parents Statement

The official 'Information to Parents' statement issued by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families should be included immediately following this section in its entirety, without modification, to satisfy state licensing requirements.

Thank You

Thank you for choosing the West Morris Area YMCA Before & After School Programs. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with your family and look forward to providing a safe, enriching, and memorable experience for your child throughout the school year.

Section 11

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following answers address many of the questions families ask throughout the school year. If you need additional assistance, please contact your Site Director or the School Programs Office.

What are the program hours?

Before Care opens at 7:00 AM and operates until your child's school start time. After Care begins at school dismissal and operates until 6:00 PM.

How do I report my child's absence?

Notify both your child's YMCA Site Director and the School Programs Office as soon as possible using GroupMe, your site phone, or other approved communication methods.

What happens if school has a delayed opening, early dismissal, or closing?

If the delayed opening, early dismissal, or school closing is included on the school district's annual calendar, YMCA care will be provided according to the published program schedule. If the delayed opening, early dismissal, or school closing is due to inclement weather, environmental conditions, or any other school safety decision, the YMCA Before & After School Program will be closed.

Can my child attend an extra-curricular activity during YMCA hours?

Yes. An authorized adult must sign your child out, personally escort them to the activity, and sign them back into the YMCA if they are returning. YMCA staff do not escort children.

Can my child bring toys or electronics?

Please leave toys, trading cards, gaming devices, and other valuables at home unless requested for a special activity.

How do I update emergency contacts or pick-up information?

Contact both your child's YMCA Site Director and the School Programs Office immediately whenever your emergency contacts, phone numbers, email addresses, or authorized pick-up information change.

What if my child becomes ill?

Your child will be supervised away from the group until an authorized adult arrives. Children must meet the return-to-program requirements before attending again.

How do I request a schedule change or withdraw?

Submit your request in writing to the School Programs Office. Two weeks' written notice is required for withdrawals.

Is financial assistance available?

Yes. YMCA Financial Assistance and eligible child care subsidy programs are available for qualifying families.

Need Additional Assistance?

For questions regarding your child's daily care, attendance, or site-specific information, please contact your YMCA Site Director. For registration, billing, schedule changes, or program policies, please contact the School Programs Office.