



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Parent Handbook

Philosophy

Patriots Gateway Community Center (hereafter referred to as PGCC) strives to maintain a positive approach to managing childrens' behavior at all times. "Discipline" is the process of teaching self-control and the ability to live within limitations and agreed upon guidelines. The PGCC staff and children establish expected behavior guidelines. Positive behavior is self-rewarding and allows for program activities to occur. When children choose to behave outside of the guidelines, some consequence is required to avoid future problems. The overall safety of all children in the program is our highest priority.

Program

Youth enrolled in PGCC's After-School Program will have the opportunity to experience a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, homework help, arts / crafts, character development, and fitness. Participants will experience opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and creative thinking, while focusing on the principles of caring, honesty, responsibility, and respect. Participants are expected to take part in all activities.

Hours

Program hours are 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Participants should be picked-up by 5:45, if possible, but no later than 6:00 p.m. These time frames are designed to ensure quality programming and safety for all participants. There will be a \$1.00 per minute late fee assessed for participants that are picked-up after 6:00 p.m. If a participant is not picked-up by 6:15 p.m., the authorities may be called. Continued abuse will result in termination from the program.

Fees

Please see the After-School Program Registration Form for the current weekly fee. There are no adjustments in the fee for absences, non-participation, suspensions, or emergency closings. Your fee covers the direct operating expenses. All of the services covered by the fee must be available to your child. When you enroll your child, you are reserving space, time, staffing, and provisions, regardless of whether your child attends.

Authorized Personnel

Only those individuals listed on your child's registration form will be allowed to pick-up your child from the program. Photo identification will be required. This is for the safety of the children.

Discipline

When positive behavior is displayed, the consequence is participation in and enjoyment of planned activities. In cases of negative or inappropriate behavior, the following processes will be employed.

1. Reasoning and Redirection: Every effort will be made to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his / her action and agree to an alternative form of behavior. Children may be redirected to alternative activities. When the conflict is child-to-child, every effort will be made to have them reason together face-to-face, with staff facilitating.
2. Removal from Specific Activity: When reasoning has been pursued and has not changed behavior, removing the child from the activity involved for an appropriate amount of time may become necessary. The denied activity will be related to the misbehavior.
3. Child / Director Conference: When the counselor is not successful in correcting behavior, the Program Director may meet with the child to redirect him / her to use of proper conflict resolution strategies.
4. Parent Conference: If the parent needs to be formally involved in the process, specific changes in behavior will be requested, with specific consequences for non-compliance outlined. This is usually accomplished through the use of a "Behavior Contract". When possible, the child is present and participates in these conferences. The goal is to define what changes need to be made to help the child be successful in the program.

Removal from Program for Inappropriate Behavior

If the above process has not resulted in corrected behavior, the family will be required to remove the child from the program.

Behavior-Related Issues

In addition to behavior management procedures outlined above, parents / guardians must be aware that:

- No staff member may ever strike, swear at, abuse, or threaten with physical intimidation either a child or parent.
- No staff member will allow a child to be struck, sworn at, abused, or physically intimidated by anyone else in the program.
- No child who becomes a safety hazard to him/herself or others will be allowed to continue in the program.
- No staff member will ever solicit or accept gratuities in consideration for any treatment of a child.

Behavior Management

The safety of a child is the highest priority for setting behavior management procedures. When a child has a serious discipline problem (on any ONE (1) occasion), the parent / guardian may be called by staff and requested to pick-up the child within one (1) hour of the call. Examples of a serious discipline problem may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Hitting another child
- Threatening or intimidating others
- Injuring another child or staff member
- Leaving the program site and / or refusing to remain with their groups
- Use of foul language or being repeatedly disrespectful towards staff
- Defacing or otherwise damaging PGCC or field trip destination property
- Stealing

If PGCC staff concludes that a child poses a serious discipline problem, the child may be suspended from the program for a period of 1 to 5 days or be removed from the program entirely. **No refunds or credits of fees will be given if a child is suspended or removed from the program.**

Appropriate Behavior Between Parent / Guardian and PGCC Staff

Any abusive behavior displayed by a parent or individual associated with the child towards any PGCC staff may result in suspension or termination from the program. This includes yelling, threatening, or other perceived aggressive behavior. PGCC staff work in a professional manner, treating you and your child with the highest level of respect. They deserve and expect the same level of respect in return.

PGCC Child Abuse Prevention Policy

PGCC maintains a policy of Child Abuse Prevention practices, which include procedures related to:

- Employee reference checks, hiring criteria, and background checks
- Training and supervision requirements for staff
- Staff relationships with children
- Unscheduled site visitation by PGCC supervisory staff or members of the Board of Directors

These policies are enacted to protect parents, children, and PGCC staff members from actual occurrences or allegations of child abuse. For more information, contact the Program Director.

Opportunities for Communication

To ensure you and your child are getting the most out of your PGCC After-School Program experience, we want to have open lines of communication with you. Please call if you have any questions. You are also welcome to stop in any time to check on the program and your child's progress.

Parent Information Area

When you sign out your child each day, please check for any up-to-date information or notices at the front desk. Please also check any posters or brochures for other information pertaining to PGCC activities and opportunities to volunteer.

Parent Concerns

PGCC is dedicated to developing and maintaining high levels of program service. We want to hear from you if we have not accomplished this goal. The PGCC staff is available to assist you with questions or concerns and will work with you for resolution. In the event a concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact the PGCC Executive Director.

Medication During Program

Any medication which needs to be administered during the program hours must:

- Be accompanied with a "Permission to Medicate" form
- Be brought directly to the Program Director in its original container, with the child's name, physician's name, and drug name clearly labeled on the container
- Have specific written instruction for dosage amounts, times, etc.

PGCC staff are NOT permitted to administer any over-the-counter medication, such as aspirin and cough medicine, without having written instructions and dosage given by the child's physician. All medication, including inhalers, cough drops, ointments, etc., must be kept locked in a cabinet or in the possession of a staff member.

NOTE: Staff cannot split pills or administer amounts other than as specified on the prescription bottle label, unless directions are given in writing by the child's physician.

Chronic Health Issues

PGCC will administer medications to children who have asthma, experience allergic reactions, or require blood-glucose tests. PGCC will not administer insulin shots. Any other substitute foods for raising blood sugar, such as honey, orange juice, or other food substance will be maintained at the parents' request if we are reasonably able to do so. Parents of children with any potentially life-threatening illness or condition must be reachable by PGCC staff the entire time the child is at PGCC.

Illness During Program Hours

If your child becomes ill, he / she will be isolated from other children, and you will be contacted to pick-up him / her. PGCC is not equipped to handle ill children beyond securing their immediate comfort. If you are contacted, you need to make arrangements to pick-up your child within one (1) hour. Please keep PGCC informed of any changes in your work or emergency phone numbers. If you cannot be reached, we will contact someone you have authorized.

Child Illness

For the sake of your child and others, if your child has a temperature of one full degree over normal, is vomiting, or shows other signs of illness (rash, diarrhea, sore throat, etc.), they may not attend the PGCC summer program. Also, please keep your child at home if they are too tired to participate in planned activities. By 1:30 p.m. on the day of the absence, parents / guardians should notify PGCC of their child's absence **AND** the nature of the absence by calling (815) 967-0413, ext.10, and leaving a message.

Injuries During Program Hours

If your child is injured during program hours, the staff members in charge will take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care as warranted. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide immediate first aid
- Attempt to contact parent / guardian
- Attempt to contact others listed on your registration forms.

In case of serious injury, appropriate emergency medical assistance will be contacted (911 will be called). A PGCC staff member will remain with the child until a parent / guardian or other authorized adult arrives. PGCC staff may not transport program participants.

PGCC does **NOT** carry accident insurance on participants. All expenses incurred in the treatment of injuries due to accidents that occur during a PGCC program will be the responsibility of the parent / guardian.

Emergency Procedures

If the PGCC program site must evacuate due to an emergency, we will go to the designated location posted on the PGCC "Emergency Care and Disaster Plan."

Snacks and Lunches

An afternoon snack (also referred to as a "cold supper") will be provided to participants. Refrigeration and / or warming of food you send with your child cannot be provided. So, please do not send perishable items or items that need to be heated or cooked. Please inform the PGCC Program Director in writing about any food allergies your child has.

Clothing, Personal Items, Lost & Found

Children will be doing arts & crafts and probably going outside, so clothes may get soiled. Children should not wear clothing that restricts activity. Footwear is required. **Tennis shoes** are highly recommended for active play. **No flip-flops or shoes with heels allowed during active play times.**

Please **mark all of your child's belongings** (i.e., lunch boxes, water bottles, jackets, backpacks). PGCC will not be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen articles. Please do not let your child bring valuables (cell phones, iPods, toys, trading cards, video games, etc.) to the site. These items will be confiscated and returned to the parent / guardian at the end of the day. After one week, lost and found items will be donated to a charitable agency.

DCFS Exemption

The program and PGCC's facility are exempt from licensing and regulation by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Firearms-Free Site

Firearms are not permitted in PGCC's facility or on its grounds.

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I have read and agree to adhere to the policies outlined in this handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to familiarize my child and those listed on my child's registration form with these policies. Failure by myself, my child, or those authorized personnel on my form to follow these policies may result in my child being terminated from the program.

Child's name (Please print.)

Parent's / Guardian's name (Please print)

Parent's / Guardian's signature

Date