



**ATHENS-MCMINN FAMILY YMCA
YOUTH PROGRAMS
PARENT HANDBOOK**

Revised 3/16/2026

WELCOME!

All youth need the intellectual development, motivation and skills that equip them for successful work and lifelong learning. These result from quality learning environments, challenging expectations, and consistent guidance and mentoring.

YMCA youth programs are designed to foster opportunities for young people to build skills, exercise leadership and form relationships with caring adults and their communities. Using this approach, we create environments in which young people thrive. We offer day camps and after school programming to kids, ages 5-14.

Summer Day Camp is offered during the summer months from 7:30am-6pm on weekdays. Each week of camp (ten weeks total) offer a weekly theme with planned activities like swimming and visits from outside organizations.

After School Care is offered during the school year from 3:30pm until 6pm each weekday. Attendees will enjoy an early dinner meal while participating in planned activities.

School's Out Camp is offered during planned days out from school. It operates from 7:30am-6pm on weekdays. Attendees will enjoy lunch and afternoon snack while participating in planned activities.

DEAR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Thank for you choosing the YMCA youth programs as your child's activity! This parent guide will help familiarize you with our program and help your family prepare for your child's program experience. Reading through this guide with your child is important and should answer any questions you may have.

A great program requires a partnership between staff and parents. We are thrilled to work with your kids and provide a safe, fun atmosphere while we do that! Consistent communication is always best, so please don't hesitate to reach out to us when you need to speak with a team member. Our staff is here to listen, help, and react appropriately per our YMCA policies and guidelines.

Sincerely,

Matthew Roberts, Sr. Director of Youth & Family Programs

matt@athensmcmminnymca.org
(423)745-4904

PHILOSOPHY & PURPOSE

At the YMCA, we're for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. YMCA youth programs engage a child's physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Using small group experiences that are developmentally appropriate, kids will:

- Develop physically, emotionally, and socially through a variety of safe, developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences.
- Learn and display the four core values of the YMCA: respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring
- Increase appreciation for their own family, friends, and surrounding community

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Camp is geared to involve age-appropriate activities in both large and small group settings. Planned task orientated activities challenge their present ability and teach new skills.

- Older, more mature campers accept positions of responsibility and leadership in planning activities and establishing rules
- Younger campers are encouraged to accept responsibility and develop self-reliance

FOR HEALTHY LIVING

With the right building blocks for healthy development, campers gain the skills they need to be active, thriving, and contributing members of society.

- Healthy food items are served in our meal program
- Physical activities develop good coordination and skills development through physical fitness
- Opportunities for outdoor and recreational activities are planned every day

FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Campers learn appropriate social behavior through group discussions, projects, positive adult-modeling, and gain a sense of belonging.

- Build self-esteem and demonstrate helpful attitudes
- Make new friends and build meaningful relationships with others
- Discover who they are
- Help and serve others

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

Once you enroll in our program, a space is reserved for your child. Athens-McMinn Family YMCA does not discriminate by race, color, sex, national origin, creed or special needs.

- Registration is completed online at athensmcminnymca.org/youth-programs.
- A non-refundable \$30 registration fee will be paid online upon registration for youth programs, excluding School's Out Camps.
- You will be enrolled in an autodraft payment system for your chosen days or weeks of Summer Camp/School's Out Camps.
- You will be enrolled in an autodraft payment system for every scheduled week of the school year for After School Care.
- You will be added to a REMIND APP (it is free) group via text to communicate with staff regularly. However, email is always available as well as calls made by phone to (423)745-4904.

DON'T FORGET...

- Put your child's name on their belongings. We will give each camper a YMCA drawstring bag to use during Summer Camp!
- Apply sunscreen daily before arrival.
- Send a bathing suit and towel on water days.
- Make sure your child wears comfortable shoes. No flip flops.
- We do not allow toys and electronics (phones/tablets/laptops) from home.
- The YMCA is not responsible for broken, lost or stolen items. We will instruct your kids to put items away in their bags or store them in an office.
- Pack an extra change of clothes each day just in case.
- Please send a water bottle for your child to drink during the day and label the water bottle with their full name.

MEALS AT THE YMCA

- The YMCA will provide:
 - Breakfast by 9:45am and lunch by 1:15pm during summer programs.
 - Lunch and afternoon snack during School's Out Camps.
 - Early dinner during After School Care.
- Packed lunches must be stored in a lunchbox that can keep food cool. Please label the lunchbox.
- Please do not send lunches in a plastic/paper sack (unless instructed on trip days).
- Carbonated beverages (soft drinks) and peanuts **in any form are not permitted.**

MEDICATION

You must fill out the medication form if your child requires medications during programming.

- If your child must take medication during the program hours, you must provide the written instructions with the medication prescribed by a doctor in its original prescription bottle.
- Parents must fill out a "Permission to Administer Medication" form at the front desk prior to the administration of medications.
- **We prefer not to administer medication.**

SUNSCREEN

- The YMCA will administer sunscreen as needed and if given documented approval to do so during online registration.
- Parents can refuse the use of YMCA administered sunscreen during the registration process. They can supply their own sunscreen with the child.

SWIM/WATER DAYS

- The YMCA has an indoor pool with a shallow and deep end. We offer coast guard approved life jackets and always have American Red Cross certified lifeguards supervising the pool area and swimmers.
- Campers will swim on Mondays & Wednesdays between 11am and 3pm.
- Campers must pass a deep end swim test to swim in the deep end.
- Nonswimmers/inexperienced swimmers will be outfitted in a life jacket.
- Campers do not have to swim, but this recreational activity is fun and highly encouraged!

FEE POLICIES

Registration Changes

Adding Weeks

Weeks may be added when space is available by registering online at athensmcminnymca.org. A waitlist will generate upon registration. YMCA staff monitors this list frequently and will move participants to the active list if space allows. An email will be sent to you when this occurs.

Canceling/Deleting Weeks

The \$30 registration fee is non-refundable. You are responsible for the weekly payment of the day or week you are canceling unless you email or provide a 10-day written notice of cancellation prior to the scheduled draft date to matt@athensmcminnymca.org.

Program Fees

Upon registration, you will be enrolled in an autodraft payment system for your days or weeks of service.

- **After School Care:**
 - Weekly drafts will occur the Friday before the week of service.
 - Base rates: \$46/member; \$59/nonmember
- **School's Out Camps:**
 - Daily camp fees will draft up to 48 hours before the day of camp.
 - Base rates are: \$20/member/child; \$25/nonmember/child.
- **Summer Day Camp:**
 - Fees will draft the Friday before the week of service.
 - Base rates are: \$85/member/child and \$120/nonmember/child.
- Sibling discounts of 15% will be added to the second, third, and so on siblings (excluding School's Out Camps) or financial assistance is available upon request.
- A \$30 return payment fee will be assessed to the account if there are not enough funds in the account at the time of the draft.

Program Fees Continued

- A change in vacation plans, alternative child care, or being sick does not eliminate the responsibility to pay for a week that you have registered without a 10-day written notice prior to the scheduled draft date for the change.
- Failure to keep fees current will result in a loss of care and ability to register for other YMCA programs.
- Parents/caregivers are financially responsible for every day or week that is registered even if the child does not attend.
- The YMCA will not prorate days not attended from your fees.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

- **Summer Camp and School's Out Camp:**
 - The program opens at 7:30am.
 - The core part of our program begins by 8:30am. Please make arrangements to drop your child off by that time so they don't miss any activities.
- **After School Care:**
 - The program opens at 3:30pm.
 - The core part of our program begins by 4:00pm.
- **Drop off:**
 - When dropping your child off, you must sign them in at the front desk.
 - You must park in a parking spot.
 - If YMCA staff are picking your children up for After School Care at school, you must notify your child's teacher of these arrangements.
- **Pick up:**
 - You must park in a parking spot.
 - You must provide a list of people other than the legal guardians who can drop off or pick up your child.
 - Parents are responsible for adding adults to their **AUTHORIZED PICKUP LIST** on their online account.
 - We will not release any child/children to a person that is not on the list unless we receive written notice from the parent or guardian prior to the child/children being picked up.
 - The person picking the child up must be 18 years old with proper photo identification. We will not release the child to anyone under the age of 18 or someone without proper photo identification matching the Authorized Pickup List.
 - Your child/children must be picked up by 6pm from the program.
 - There will be a \$1 per minute per child late charge after 6 pm. The late fee will be added to your account and you will need to pay it online at athensmcmminnymca.org by the end of the week.
 - If you have a late fee balance at the end of the week, your child may not attend the following week.

- The Athens-McMinn Family YMCA has a written policy regarding intoxicated adults or adults who display behavior which may place the child/children in immediate risk when picking up. The YMCA will inform adults picking up children from our program who clearly appear intoxicated or display "erratic" behavior that we suggest that they allow us to call another adult from the authorized pickup list to pick them up.
- As mandated reporters, we are required to contact the police or child protective services and report the incident.
- Please do not send your child to the program if they are sick. Should your child display sick behaviors at check-in, we will deny access.
- If your child becomes ill at the site, a parent or authorized pickup adult will be contacted and asked to take the child home. You will be contacted for common symptoms of illnesses like vomiting, diarrhea, fever, presence of lice and other symptoms associated with contagious conditions as well as a child who is clearly uncomfortable, lethargic, and unable to participate in daily activities. The child will be isolated, within sight of an adult, until the parent arrives. If the parent cannot be reached, the staff will contact the emergency contact person listed on the child's info form. Because we cannot provide sick care, parent or emergency contacts must pick up their child within one hour after being called.

LOST & FOUND

The Athens-McMinn Family YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please talk with your child about keeping track of their items. We do not allow electronic devices.

BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

A high quality program can only take place in an orderly, mutually respectful, caring environment. Child guidance is a process where children take increasing responsibility for their own actions. Therefore, we work very hard at creating a safe and fun environment. Along with our efforts, we need the children to help us by following some simple rules. Below is our behavior agreement. Please read this Behavior Contract with your child and ensure they understand our camp's behavior policies.

- I will listen to the staff and follow directions.
- I will respect other people's belongings by not touching/ using their belongings without permission.
- I will respect all property and help clean personal messes and assist in leaving areas better than I found it.
- I will respect other people's personal space by keeping my hands and feet to myself.
- I will respect other people's feelings by having a positive attitude when talking to them.
- I will act in a caring way, and I will not hit, fight, bite, tease, harass or bully others.
- I will use my indoor voice when speaking inside.
- I will use appropriate language, which does not include swear words or negative remarks (i.e. shut up, stupid, dumb).
- Before leaving the room or program space, I will ask a staff member or permission. I will never leave an area without adult supervision.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The safety of a child is the highest priority for setting behavior management procedures. When a child has a severe discipline problem (on any ONE occasion), the parent may be called by staff and asked to pick up the child within one hour of the call. Please read further for more details on how we handle disciplinary action and communication with parents/caregivers.

DISCIPLINE

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

- Staff action will not damage the child's self-image or embarrass the child.
- Staff action will help children learn self-control, choose alternatives, identify feelings and develop an understanding and respect of feelings for others.
- Staff will communicate regularly with families regarding behavior concerns.
- Every effort will be made by staff to enlist the cooperation of the child and parents to solve behavioral issues.
- To teach responsibility in the event that a child deliberately damages any property or equipment that the YMCA is using, the child/parent will be responsible for the cost of replacement.
- Our staff are responsible for addressing behavioral issues and re-direction of the children in our program.
- We do not allow you to "discipline" or question children that are not your own. This applies to our program or activities whether they are on- or off-site locations.
- Failure to adhere to this policy could result in parental suspension or expulsion from the program or not being allowed on YMCA property.
- The YMCA will communicate with parents when they observe concerns regarding behavior changes or patterns being established. This may be in person or by phone call.
- The YMCA also requests that parents/caregivers communicate with staff to report an incident to our team if your camper shares information with you that our team may not have received during camp.

PROGRAM SUSPENSION AND/OR DISMISSAL

Not abiding by the rules listed in the Behavior Contract (see page 3) may result in suspension from one to three days or in termination from the program.

- All incidents will be handled on a three (3) incident system, except for hitting, fighting, and inappropriately touching another camper.
- Hitting, fighting and inappropriately touching another camper will be an immediate 1-3 day suspension from the program.
- All other incidents will be handled as follows:
 - 1st incident: Verbal Warning
 - 2nd incident: Written Warning & Parent Contact
 - 3rd incident: 1 to 3 day suspension & Parent Meeting
 - More than 3 incidents will be subject to camper to dismissal from the program.

YMCA leadership reserves the right to dismiss/dis-enroll a child from the program if the child's behavior is disruptive to the program and/or compromises the safety of themselves, other children and/or staff. Children suspended/terminated from the program will not qualify for a refund.

The YMCA adheres to a zero-tolerance policy concerning child sex abuse, weapons, and controlled substances. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a dismissal to our program.

If a child is dismissed from a YMCA youth program, he/she may not be eligible for re-enrollment in any YMCA child care program. Additional reasons for dismissal other than behavioral issues are:

- Non-payment of fees.
- Not following the YMCA youth program policies or guidelines.
- Repeated failure of parents to pick up child on time.
- Failure to provide site with current or updated emergency/ medical or contact information.
- Inappropriate conduct of parent or guardian.
- Repeated failure to sign the child in or out each day.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

At the YMCA, we believe that every child deserves a safe environment to grow. As mandated reporters, we take child abuse seriously and are required to report any incident that may intentionally, recklessly and/or knowingly cause harm to a child. Our counselors are trained in child abuse recognition and reporting. We also have a Code of Conduct that all employees are expected to abide by. These policies prohibit our employees from providing child care, transporting, attending parties, etc. outside of our YMCA programs.

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

APPROPRIATE:

- Side hugs
- Handshakes/elbows
- High fives/fist bumps
- Pat on shoulder/back

INAPPROPRIATE:

- Full frontal hug
- Kisses
- Lap sitting
- Any form of unwanted affection

BODY SAFETY RULES

- Use actual names of body parts.
- Review appropriate & inappropriate touch.
- "No" means No.
- No Secrets.
- Build a "Body Safety Netwrk: of 3-5 trusted adults that your child can talk to.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

APPROPRIATE:

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise

INAPPROPRIATE:

- Name calling
- Secrets
- Cursing
- Derogatory remarks or sexual language

SOCIAL MEDIA

Please know that our program prohibits child participant-staff interactions on social media. If your child seeks to "friend" or "follow" YMCA counselors, please explain to your child that counselors "need their space" during time away from YMCA programs. We do encourage you to like/follow us on our YMCA Facebook and Instagram pages.

RESTROOM & LOCKER ROOM POLICIES

Due to our child abuse prevention policies we:

- Do not allow children, including siblings, to enter a restroom or locker room area together without supervision
- Require two staff members to be with children at all times while utilizing the locker rooms/restrooms

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION WEBPAGE

Information regarding our child abuse prevention policies can be found on our website at www.athensmcminnymca.org/child-abuse-prevention or at the QR code to the right.



Upon reading the 2026 YMCA Youth Programs Parent Handbook should you have any questions, please direct them to [Sr. Director of Youth & Family Programs, Matthew Roberts](mailto:matt@athensmcminnymca.org).
matt@athensmcminnymca.org | (423)745-4904

WEEKLY THEMES AND DATES

- May 26 - May 30 Welcome Week
- June 1 - June 6 Community Helpers Week
- June 8 - June 13 Safari Week
- June 15 - June 20 Mad Scientist Week
- June 22 - June 27 Disney Week
- June 29 - July 3 Splash Week (closed on July 4th)
- July 6 - July 11 Tennessee Adventures Week
- July 13 - July 18 Hard Hat Week
- July 20 - July 25 Goodbye Summer Week
- July 27 - July 31 Back to School Week

SAMPLE MENU FOR MEALS