

# After School Childcare

Washington County Recreation Department Child Care Program



## Parent Handbook

Washington County Recreation Department  
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# FOREWARD

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to the after school program!

This handbook is designed to give parents and guardians a helpful insight into the after school program offered by the Washington County Recreation Department. It includes detailed information about after school activities, procedures, and policies. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it in a safe place for easy reference during the school year.

The after school program strives to provide quality and affordable childcare to our families. It is our goal to provide a safe, fun, encouraging, and caring environment for our children. We always welcome suggestions and ideas that will help us to make your child's time in the after school program beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us at anytime.

Many thanks go to the Washington County School System for their support and ongoing commitment to the after school program, to Abingdon Elementary for housing our program, to the staff of our after school program for their energy and the outstanding job they do with the children each and every day, and to the parents and guardians of the children in our program for their continued support. A special thank you goes to the Washington County Board of Supervisors who believe in offering affordable and quality childcare to the citizens of Washington County; without their support and continued funding, the after school program would not be possible. We would not be able to offer the after school program without the support of so many and the children benefit greatly from the many special qualities contributed by so many wonderful and caring people.

If you have any questions about the contents of this handbook, please feel free to call me at 276-525-1387. I look forward to getting to know each family!

Thank you.

Katie Hall  
Programs Specialist

# THE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The after school program is operated by the Washington County Recreation Department, in cooperation with the Washington County School System. The after school program began in August of 2011, after the principal of Highpoint Elementary (Mrs. Cunningham) approached the recreation department staff in regards to the need of after school child care. It is the goal of the Recreation Department to eventually serve all seven elementary schools in Washington County.

Our outstanding staff is comprised of certified elementary school teachers, qualified elementary school aides, qualified child care providers, college students, and Bonner Scholars from Emory and Henry College. Both a criminal and social services background check are performed on all staff members. Our staff members are CPR, First Aid, and AED certified, for both children and adults.

Our operating policy maintains a maximum staff/child ratio of one to ten. On a rare occasion, during staff development days or an unexpected absence, the staff/child ratio may increase to the Virginia standard of one to eighteen.

The after school program uses the iCare software at all locations.

## ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Once a child is admitted to the after school program, that child is guaranteed the same placement in the following year's after school program (subject to returned registration form and tuition deposit.) Priority is also given to siblings that will be enrolling in school the following year. Registration notices for the following year will be sent home via the after school program in May and will be due by the end of the month. Once registration opens to the public, families who have not returned a registration form are no longer guaranteed a spot in the program for the following year.

Registration will open to the public on date set forth by the Recreation Department, typically the first week of June (depending on school and Department schedules.) This date will be posted in the Recreation Department's programs brochure and on social media sites. Children will be admitted on a first come, first serve basis.

The Recreation Department will be at school registration day. ***New and existing participants must stop by the Department's table to complete paperwork/registration for the new school year.*** Attendance schedules and any other pertinent information will be taken at this time. Any open slots may also be filled during this time.

Families on the waiting list will be given the opportunity to fill any openings that occur during the school year. However, the waiting list does end with the current school year. Any family still on the waiting list must call during open enrollment to obtain a slot.

**In order for a child's slot in the after school program to be guaranteed, outstanding balances, deposits, and information forms must be received by the dates specified by the Recreation Department.**

The after school program will forward an attendance list to each elementary school before the beginning of the year. **Please inform your child's teacher of your child's enrollment in the after school program. Please also detail your child's dismissal procedure in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal.**

## **TUITION**

The after school programs tuition is based upon weekly attendance. You only pay for the days that your child attends. Tuition rates are prorated to accommodate early dismissal days. Tuition for after school care is \$30 per week/\$6 per day.

You may access your account balance at any time through the iCare Parent Portal. You may also ask any staff member for your account information or call the Programs Specialist at any time. Account statements will be printed and distributed as needed.

Tuition payments may be made online via the iCare Parent Portal, or check/cash payment may be given to any after school staff member when you arrive to pick up your child. PLEASE do not send payment through your child's classroom.

The Recreation Department understands that everyone has a different pay schedule and there are sometimes unexpected expenses that arise. In order to accommodate your budget there is not a set pay schedule; you may pay daily, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. However, the Recreation Department reserves the right to impose a \$10 late payment penalty on those accounts that have not posted payment in a month's time. If non-payment on the account continues, the Recreation Department reserves the right to revoke enrollment of the child/children.

If tuition payment becomes a problem, please contact the Programs Specialist so that a payment plan can be arranged and participation in the after school program can continue. Financial aid information is available from the Programs Specialist.

A yearly statement for tax purposes is issued by January 31.

## **SCHEDULE OF OPERATION**

The after school program operates from afternoon dismissal until 5:45p.m.

The after school program operates at all times on the Washington County School System schedule.

### **Scheduled Early Dismissals**

If there is a scheduled early dismissal on the Washington County Schools calendar, then after school care *will* operate. This includes, but is not limited to, early dismissal due to parent/teacher conferences, end of grading period, and teacher workdays.

### **Unscheduled Early Dismissals**

If Washington County Schools dismiss early due to weather or any other emergency, after school care will *not* operate. Please be sure to notify your child's teacher/school of their plan for an unscheduled early dismissal.

### **Snow/Inclement Weather Delay**

If Washington County Schools are on a delay in the morning, after school care will operate as scheduled.

### **School Closings**

After school care will not operate on any day that Washington County Schools are closed. This includes snow days, legal holidays, religious holidays, or school breaks.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

After school care is held on site at your child's school, therefore, transportation to after school care is not needed. However, no transportation is available to bring your child home when after school care is over.

Should families have a middle school aged child with siblings in our after school program or a child that was previously enrolled in our after school program that has now promoted to the middle school, they are allowed to attend after school. Transportation to the elementary school must be arranged by the parent and middle school. The Recreation Department is not responsible for transportation.

## **DAILY SCHOOL DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

**Abingdon Elementary:** Students are escorted to the cafeteria by their teachers. After school staff will be waiting to receive children there.

**In order to ensure the safety of your child, please be sure to send a written note to your child's teacher detailing any schedule changes in your child's attendance at after school.**

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

The safety of each child is paramount to the staff of the after school program. If a child will not be attending the after school program as scheduled, it is **essential** that the child's parents notify

the Recreation Department. To report your child's absence you may do any one of the following:

- Notify any staff member if absence is known in advance
- Send a message via the iCare Parent Portal
- Send text message to 276-274-6192
- Call 276-525-1387
- Or email [khall@washcova.com](mailto:khall@washcova.com)

### **Check in Procedure**

Each child will be checked in via the iCare software on the tablet by an after school program staff member.

When a child who is scheduled to attend the after school program does not arrive and the program has not received notice from the parent/guardian, we will institute an immediate search. An unexcused absence will initiate the following actions:

- The child's school will be contacted to see if the child was absent or dismissed from school.
- The child's parents will be contacted via phone, text, and/or email.
- Once the child's parents have been contacted, the after school program will assist in the effort to locate the child, but will shift the primary responsibility for locating the child to the child's parents.
- If a child's parents/guardians cannot be contacted, someone from the child's emergency contact list will be contacted.

**Please help us to avoid unnecessary concern about a child's safety by notifying the Recreation Department whenever a child will be absent from the after school program.**

Once a child is in our care, they will not be allowed to return to their classroom under any circumstances.

### **Check out procedure**

The after school program utilizes a checkout system to ensure that each child is dismissed to the proper person at the end of the day. Children will not be allowed to leave after school care unattended.

Parents/Guardians must walk into the school and/or playground and checkout their child from a staff member. Parents/Guardians will be required to use their iCare pin number to check their child out on the tablet.

Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or person listed on the child's registration information. If someone other than those listed on the registration form will be picking your child up from after school care, you must notify the Programs Specialist. The person picking up your child must have your iCare pin number. If they do not have the correct number, they will not be allowed to pick up your child.

For the safety of your child, do not share your iCare pin number with anyone that is not allowed to pick up your child.

If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a child, the staff member may ask to see picture identification.

Parent's picking up a child should use the following entrance:

**Abingdon Elementary School:** Please use the entrance located at the front of the building, between the gymnasium and the cafeteria. These doors will remain locked, but a staff member will be available to let you in.

If students are anywhere else in the building or on the playground, there will be a sign posted on the door along with where you may come to sign them out. Please do not use the main entrance and buzz the office unless you cannot gain access from the designated location.

### **Late pickup policy**

The after school program closes promptly at 5:45p.m. The iCare software will automatically begin to assess a late fee of \$5 every ten minutes until the child is checked out by the parent/guardian.

If you know that you will be arriving late, please notify the Programs Specialist so that we can notify the after school staff. This way they will know when to expect you and can explain to your child so that they do not worry.

Late fees may be waived at the discretion of the Recreation Department with a valid excuse. Continual occurrences of late pickup will not be waived.

## **PROGRAMMING**

The after school program is designed to simply be after school childcare. Throughout the year children are offered to make various crafts, have holiday parties, watch movies, participate in organized games, or participate in free play. The Recreation Department provides various toys and games (board games, play dough, tea sets, dinosaurs, Barbies, baby dolls, Legos, blocks, farm animals, Polly Pocket dolls, etc.) as well as sports equipment (basketballs, volleyballs, jump ropes, footballs, etc.) for your child to enjoy. The Washington County Library also provides each location with a box of books for those that would like to read. This box of books changes every month.

### **Snacks**

Water and snacks are provided each day. Snacks vary each week but include items such as cheese crackers, peanut butter crackers, fruit snacks, cookies, cereal bars, Pop-Tarts, and fruit

cups. If your child prefers different or additional food, please feel free to send a snack to school with your child. Children will not be allowed to use school vending machines.

If your child has any food allergies, please be sure to notify us. We always ensure that we have snacks on hand to accommodate allergies.

### **Homework policy**

The after school program stresses the importance of homework and sets time aside (30 minutes) every day for the children to complete their assignments. Staff members are available to supervise the homework area and to assist the children with their work, however, a child who needs individual help with his or her homework must ask. Because of the number of children who require assistance during homework time, the staff members are unable to check each child's homework for accuracy, completion, or provide the type of one-on-one help that is available from a tutor. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parents/guardians to check their child's work for the day.

Although we encourage the children to do their homework when it is assigned, using the time set aside to complete homework is the responsibility of the child. Children who do not wish to use homework time to complete their homework will not be punished but will have to sit quietly and read or color while the other children complete their assignments.

If your child has sporting events, lessons, or any other activity in the evenings and you wish to have them complete their homework assignments while in our care, please let us know and we will provide extra time for them to work. In the same respect, if you wish to have your child only complete homework at home, please let us know.

### **Possessions from home**

Since we cannot guarantee the safe return of personal belongings, the after school program asks that all personal possessions be left at home or in the child's book bag. Also, items from home tend to cause tension and behavioral problems between the children. It makes it easier for the staff and the children items are not brought from home. This does include toys and electronics.

### **Telephone use by children**

The after school staff does abide by a no cell phone policy and we ask that the children in our care do the same. If your child does have a cell phone that they bring to school, we ask that they follow the schools cell phone policy and leave it in their book bag at all times.

### **Restroom/Hallway policy**

After the children enter our care they are not to return to their classrooms for any reason. Children are not to be unattended in the hallways at any time. Children will be escorted to and

from the restroom and water fountain. This is not only for the protection of the children, but to be respectful to teachers still working in the building or other groups that may be using the facility for meetings.

## **HEALTH POLICY**

All children enrolled in the after school program must satisfy the minimum immunization and routine physical examination requirements in accordance with the Washington County School System. Documentation of the above must be on file with the child's school.

If a child becomes ill while attending after school care, a parent or emergency contact person will be notified. A child who is not feeling well should be picked up as soon as possible.

Children who attend the program should be well enough to attend school. Children who have a contagious condition, eye ailment, head lice, rash, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, may not attend the after school program and must be fully recovered before returning.

### **Accidents of acute illness**

In the event of accident or acute illness, every effort will be made to notify the child's parents and/or physician prior to treatment. If a situation requires immediate attention, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance.

### **Medication policy**

The after school program will dispense prescription medication only in emergency situations. All medication administered by the staff must be current and in a pharmacy labeled container. An adult must bring the medication to the program; children are not allowed to transport medication. The after school staff will not administer any non-prescription medication.

### **Abuse and neglect policy**

The staff of the after school program are mandated reporters and as such, are required to report all suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. The majority of the staff members are trained in Steward's of Children Child Abuse Prevention Training.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The after school program and the Recreation Department maintain an open door policy. Please feel free to direct questions or concerns related to any facet of the after school program to the Programs Specialist at any time.

Any questions regarding tuition, policies, staffing, activities, or a child's participation in the program may be directed to the Programs Specialist at 276-525-1387 or [khall@washcova.com](mailto:khall@washcova.com).

If a concern involving a staff member arises, please speak directly to the staff member involved. If the matter cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, the Programs Specialist and/or Programs Coordinator will meet with the staff member and resolve the concern.

The first priority of the staff is to focus as much attention as possible on the children. In order to meet the needs of the children and the staff during program hours, we ask parents limit their conversation with after school program staff members to subjects involving their child. The Programs Specialist is available to answer all other questions that arise. Please feel free to call at any time.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN**

The children and staff of the After School Program are asked to treat each other with courtesy, honesty, and respect. The rules and behavior expectations will be explained to the children clearly and reinforced in a consistent manner.

Under no circumstances will a child be subjected to neglect, physical punishment, verbal abuse, denial of snack or restroom facilities as punishment. Children may be asked to apologize, may be restricted from the use of supplies or equipment, and in most circumstances "time outs" will be utilized. Time outs will be no longer than 15 minutes and children will never be left unsupervised during their time out session.

If a child has specific behavioral issues, every effort will be made to implement a behavioral management plan consistent with the efforts begin made at the child's home and school.

A parent or staff member reserves the right to request a meeting at any time.

Any child who does not accept the physical boundaries of the After School Program, or exhibits behavior that threatens his/her wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is subject to dismissal without notice. The Recreation Department does support a zero tolerance policy on violence and abusive behavior, whether physical or verbal.

Please note that we are an extension of Washington County Virginia and adhere to the same rules and policies as the Washington County School System. Severe infractions may be subject to school penalties as well. Please refer to the school handbooks.

Any inappropriate behavior by a parent, including verbal abuse of a child or staff member, or confrontations with staff members in the presence of a child is grounds for termination of the family's participation in the After School Program without notice.

### **Behavior expectations**

We expect children to behave as follows:

- Be responsible for personal belongings
- Possess positive and caring attitudes
- Follow proper safety procedures at all times, including:
  - Never opening outside doors
  - No fighting or using foul language
  - No running in school, sidewalks, or parking lots
  - No playing in restrooms
  - No playing on or under tables
  - No playing on or under the bleachers
- Using good table manners at snack time
- Respect for fellow students and staff
- Stay with the group and listen to your counselor at all times

Unacceptable behavior includes but is not limited to the following:

- Foul language
- Disrespect for another child or staff member
- Fighting
- Ignoring or disobeying rules of safety
- Refusing to listen to or follow directions of staff members
- Defacing property or vandalism
- Stealing
- Willful disobedience
- Bringing items to childcare that may be harmful (knives, toy guns, etc.)
- Using items in a harmful way (toys, scissors, etc.)
- Throwing mulch on the playground

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

**Minor Infractions** (Ex: sitting on a table, not sharing, not using good manners, etc.)

- Child will be given a verbal warning/reminder of proper behavior
- Child will be given a chance to correct the behavior
- If the problem persists, child may be placed in time out

- Any child placed in time out will be recorded in the discipline log. Parents may ask to view the discipline log at any time to monitor or follow up on their child's behavior.

**Severe Infractions** (Ex: continuous/repetitive minor infractions, disobeying rules of safety, using items in a harmful way, willful disobedience, etc.)

- Child will be placed immediately in time out
- Parent will be notified verbally and in writing
- Parent may be asked to come pick-up their child early since disruptive behavior does take away time and attention from other participants
- If more than 3 severe infractions occur within a week (5 school days) a conference with Programs Director and/or Programs Director, staff members, child, and parents will be arranged. Refusal to attend this meeting will result in immediate 2 day suspension from the After School Program.
- If the behavior is not corrected following the parent/staff meeting, child will be suspended from the After School Program for up to one week (5 school days.)

**Extreme Infractions** (Ex: Continuous/repetitive severe infractions, fighting, defacing property or vandalism, etc.)

- Child will be expelled from the program
- Expulsion does not require a notice and will begin immediately

Suspensions and/or expulsions may be appealed by contacting the Recreation Department Manager. **THERE ARE NO REFUNDS OR CREDITS FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION**