Staff Behavior Policy

Public Relations

When you accept employment with [Program Name] you become a member of the Afterschool Program. It is important to develop a positive relationship with the children and parents you come in contact with.

# Appearance & Conduct

Neat appearance (please cover underwear and midriff), appropriate conduct, and helpful attitude are important as a [Program Name]Afterschool Employee. Please be thoughtful of your dress.

If you are asked a question and do not know the answer, or receive a complaint and cannot resolve it, please refer the person to the Afterschool Program Site Supervisor.

# Absences

Notify the Afterschool Site Supervisor, the Program Coordinator or other identified staff member immediately if you are unable to teach a particular session. Only illness or family emergency are acceptable excuses. Please discuss known dates when you cannot teach in advance with the Site Supervisor, Program Coordinator and other.

# Confidentiality

[Program Name] Afterschool Program employees are asked to respect the confidentiality of information received about a student and/or their family during the Afterschool Program. This specifically means not talking about or using names of individuals in the program with persons not associated with [Program Title]. Suspected child abuse is the exception. (See page 4)

# Supplies

If you need supplies for your class, notify the Program Coordinator at least one week in advance. Be specific regarding quantity, color, size, etc. The Program Coordinator will let you know if your requests will be met and will purchase the agreed upon supplies. You are responsible for supplies and equipment issued to you. Please be prudent with supplies and return equipment and unused supplies at the end of the term.

*Agencies & Organizations:* Discuss supply needs with your agency supervisor. Supplies will be purchased either by yourself or your agency. In some cases, [Program Name] will reimburse the agency for materials purchased.

## Suggestions for Managing Participant Behavior

Handling the diversity of participant behavior is undoubtedly one of the most challenging tasks you will face as an instructor. No one can provide a formula that works for every participant in every situation. These are some suggestions that have been effective in many recreational settings.

**Structure the physical environment**. Arranging space and time wisely can enhance the likelihood of positive or desired behaviors. Chairs in a circle for group discussions, brief activity periods for short attention spans, removal of dangerous objects, and proper lighting can do a great deal toward encouraging appropriate behavior.

**Clearly state privileges and rules**. Let participants know what your behavior expectations are during the first class. If participants clearly understand what the acceptable behavior limits are, they will not need to test you to determine these acceptable limits. Be clear and specific and tell students how to be successful. (Ex: Always walk and talk quietly. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.) Too many rules communicated in a negative or hostile way will often encourage undesirable rebellious behavior. Explain to participants the need for rules in order to maintain safety and productivity. Refer to existing rules when having this discussion.

**Modeling.** Consistently display behaviors yourself that you expect others to exhibit, both in words and in actions. For example, acting in a friendly and respectful manner, letting others know where you stand in a positive way, playing fair, and being generous, are all leader behaviors that help to promote the desired behavior.

**Reinforce desirable behavior**. Provide clear, direct reinforcement following the occurrence of positive behavior. A sincere smile, praising gesture, or verbal feedback encourages a person to maintain or increase acceptable actions. This strategy of “positive reinforcement” works particularly well with younger students.

**Contracting**. In some situations, it might be useful to establish a written or verbal agreement with the participant. This agreement explicitly states the expected behavior and the resulting reward when this behavior is exhibited.

**Tolerate some undesirable behavior.** Too much attention given to annoying behavior may interfere with your leadership effectiveness. Small undesirable behaviors that are not safety issues can be ignored.

**Use non-verbal cues**. Behavior that is unsafe and/or hurts any person or property cannot and should not be tolerated. Before responding verbally, it may be possible to eliminate the inappropriate behavior by making clear, non-verbal responses. Eye contact, completed with a frown or gesture, may enable you to avoid the possibility of embarrassing the participant. Also, positioning yourself near or in front of the offending participant. Also, positioning yourself near or in front of the offending participant my also encourage him or her to suppress undesirable behavior. If the behavior continues or disrupts your class, please consult with the Program Coordinator.

**Redirect or change the activity**. Activities that are either too difficult or lack sufficient challenge for an individual or a group may result in negative or even disruptive behavior. Know your age level and match activities to the ability levels of the participants.

**Use time out procedures**. It may be advisable to temporarily remove a disruptive participant from the situation in which the undesirable behavior is occurring. Follow this by placing him or her in a different location where little or no positive reinforcement is received. Once removed, however, the participant should be allowed to return after a short period of time, but the return should be contingent on acceptable behavior.

**If in doubt, seek help.** No one has all the answers. Every situation is different. Seeking help is not an indication of defeat or inadequacy. When you are unsure of the appropriate action or you are unable to deal with a particular participant or situation, consult your Site Supervisor or School Principal. Remember, any time you have issues or concerns talk to the Site Supervisor or School Principal.

## Child Abuse

Our law requires all public employees to report possible child abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If you suspect abuse, please contact the After School Site Supervisor or School Principal immediately.

**Signs of child abuse include:**

# Welts Bruises

Cuts Fractures

Burns Lacerations

Swelling Strap marks

Lost teeth Malnutrition

Neglect

According to law, “an oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Children’s Services Division or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his contact.” Staff members may not inform parents of such reports.

If known, such reports shall contain the names and addresses of the child and his parents or other persons responsible for his care, child’s age, nature and extent of abuse including any evidence of previous abuse, explanation given by caretaker for injuries, and any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse and identifying the abuser.

The reporter is guaranteed a substantial degree of anonymity, unless or until the matter becomes the subject of court action. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness or the court may order that the reporter’s name is disclosed.

The law provides that anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for making the complaint, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of such report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

## Risk Management

**Definition:** Risk Management is an ongoing process concentrating on those risks which center around participant injuries, and accompanying threat of legal action, the risk of being sued.

 • You could be held liable for an act of omission or commission.

 • Anyone can sue anyone at for anything…that’s the law.

**Three primary actions to take to reduce liability:**

* Identify all possible risks.
* Identify and implement solutions to reduce or eliminate risks.
* Monitor and redesign program continually.

 **Do the following:**

* Never leave an activity unsupervised.
* Keep updated and accurate attendance records and turn in at the end of the term.
* Identify and implement solutions to reduce or eliminate risks.
* Report unsafe conditions, equipment, or situations to Site Supervisor.
* Be sure to look for hazards within your activity area before the activity begins.
* If a parent arrives to pick up a child from your class, please make sure that the child checks out with the Site Supervisor. Do not allow a child to leave without checking out.
* Be sure to look for hazards within your activity area before the activity begins.
* Do not leave your classroom until all children have left the room.
* For your protection and that of the participants, it is best to not meet alone with an individual participant.
* For your protection and that of the participants, be thoughtful about touching students for any reason.