

Intervention Behavioral Policies Winona Family YMCA After School Care and Summer Child Care Program

Character Guidelines

The goal of the ASC Program is to provide an environment that is safe and nurturing. Our goal is that children will develop relationships while enjoying healthy activities. Our program will focus on character development through our core character traits of respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty.

1. Appropriate conversations; staff and children will not be allowed to discuss inappropriate topics
2. Appropriate language, staff and children will not be allowed to use foul language or gestures
3. Respect; staff and children will be respectful to each other. Children will listen the first time.
4. Play; Children are asked to participate at all times. If they do not wish to participate in an activity, they must stay engaged in another way either by cheering on other program participants or assisting counselors with the activity.
5. Responsibility; All children must remain on the premises or at the field trip destination at all times. We want children to remain safe at all times.
6. Caring; It is important to use and care for equipment, toys, and games appropriately so they remain long lasting and we can enjoy them.
7. Bullying; bullying contains, but is not limited to name calling, singling out, hitting, shoving, and aggressive behavior. Although definitions of bullying vary, we define bullying to be behavior that hurts, humiliates, or harms a child physically or emotionally, those targeted struggle to defend themselves, there is a perceived imbalance of power, and it is repetitive.
 - a. Bullying can occur in a single incident, if that incident is either very severe or arises from a pattern of behavior, parents will be contacted to discuss next steps with this behavior.
 - b. Consequences of bullying vary based on the severity. Consequences decided on within 24 hours, based on severity and in line with low, moderate, and extreme behavior consequences, at the discretion of the School Age Director.

Children will be provided with tools to help them be successful in ASC and Summer Child Care. These tools will include;

1. Clear and well defined rules for all program spaces reviewed frequently

2. A safe and nurturing environment for them to flourish in
3. A positive atmosphere led by staff who address conflict positively, working to redirect behavior in a supportive way

Behavior Tiers

In the event that behavior does occur, staff and families will work together to find solutions. Staff will follow the behavior tier model to identify what steps must be followed.

Low Level

When a conflict occurs and is normal childhood behavior (i.e. not listening or following directions, a disagreement with a friend etc.) the child will be taken out of the activity and will talk with staff. If the behavior continues, staff will take the following steps:

1. Second incident: Staff will pull the child aside again and address the behavior. They will then institute a consequence that is fair and just for the incident. For example, if a child wasn't listening, they may ask for them to sit out of an activity for two minutes.
2. Third incident: After a third incident of the same behavior within a week, the child will have a more severe consequence that again is in line with the behavior exhibited by the child. For example, if a child is struggling all week to do their homework (out of their seat, disrupting other students) then a counselor may keep them back from gym activities while they complete their homework or help with other activities.
3. If low level behaviors continue to persist after three incidents within a week, it will be considered moderate behavior. Please follow the moderate behavior policy listed below.
4. At any point during a low level behavior, a counselor can speak with a parent during pick up to address concerns.

Moderate Level

Moderate level incidents may include but not limited to some minor physical reactions to stress, anxiety, or anger, occasional running away, or escalated habitual behavior such as continually distracting others or not listening to counselors. Moderate level behavior will follow the below procedures:

1. After a third incident of a low level behavior, staff will require a brief talk with the parents to address strategies to overcome behavior. This talk can occur at pick up and can be facilitated by the School Age Director or counselor.
2. If low level behavior is becoming habitual with a child, staff will reach out to the director to follow up with concerns of behavior. Together, they will identify an action plan of steps moving forward to ensure the family and staff can work together to overcome the

behavioral incidences. If at any point within this process behavior becomes more severe, staff may ask the family to “take a break” from care. Only the School Age Director or Assistant will ask families to take a break, at the request of ASC staff.

3. If a first time incident is at a moderate level, staff will immediately remove the child from the situation, allow for a cool down time, and have a discussion with them. They will require a consequence that is equivalent to the incident. For example, if a child throws an item out of anger they may be asked to sit out from an activity while helping clean up. If an incident such as this occurs and the child is unresponsive to moving from the situation to talk, the staff will move the group away from the child.

4. If a moderate level incident continues to occur for two weeks, staff will take extreme level Measures.

5. At all moderate level incidents, staff will communicate with parents at pick up about the incident. If the incident continues, they will also be required to talk with the director in person or via email/phone.

Extreme Level

Extreme level behavior includes habitual running away, hitting/punching/kicking/biting other people, defacing or damaging property, bringing weapons, use of drugs or alcohol, refusing to follow basic safety rules, violent outbursts, or any other incidents that go against the core values of the YMCA in a large way. For extreme level behavior, staff will take the following steps:

1. Immediately remove the child from the situation and allow them to have some cool down time. Staff will try to have a conversation with the child first to address what happened and the consequences of the action. If conversation is impossible, staff will give the child time alone in a supervised area away from others until they are ready to talk.

2. Parents will be notified within 10 minutes of an extreme level incident and asked to come pick up their child. Children will remain isolated from the group until the parent comes for pick up.

3. During this time, staff will discuss with the School Age Director appropriate repercussions. The Assistant or Director will follow up with the parents about the consequence before the end of the day.

4. Consequences may include taking a break from childcare, writing apology notes, assisting with mandatory “character building activities” that further emphasize the Y core values, or other repercussions that are equivalent to the incident.

If any level of behavior continues for longer than two weeks, the School Age Director may dismiss or suspend program participants from the After School Care or Summer Child Care program. This will only occur after staff feel they have exhausted all opportunities to improve behavior during hours of care.

It's important to note that consequences will be dealt with on a case-by-case manner. Some

consequences will have stronger effects on children than others, so handling incidents based on the child will influence future behavior more effectively.

The process to bring removed from care are as follows:

1. Take a 1 day break
2. If behavior continues or becomes more extreme it will be a 2 day break.
3. If behavior continues or becomes more extreme it will be a week long break
4. If behavior continues or becomes more extreme it will be a month long break
5. After a month-long break and behaviors continue the child will not be allowed to use YMCA School Age programs any longer.

***Please note if behaviors become too extreme and are putting others or themselves in danger the Director can make the call to pull the child from the program at ANY time.

**Staff
Responsibilities**

Staff will utilize positive reinforcement in all behavioral incidents, regardless of the level of the behavior. Positive reinforcement includes:

1. Never calling a child out in front of a group of children. Staff will always make efforts to address behavior one-on-one, out of earshot of other program participants.
2. Always practicing patience and compassion when working through conflict. This includes trying to see the perspective of the youth participant first, working to understand the root of the behavior before reacting to it.
3. Always working to figure out what a behavior is telling staff. Consider the why behind a behavior, rather than making assumptions
4. Always use positive reinforcement for good behavior. "I like that Johnny is standing with a bubble in his mouth. I like how Sally looks ready to go."
6. Relying on co-counselors and utilizing positive and productive communication to verbalize personal needs in the event that a counselor needs a moment to recharge
7. Staff must never utilize corporal punishment, including but not limited to rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, punching, hitting, and spanking children.
8. Staff must never humiliate a child or use abusive language or mechanical restraints, including;
 - a. The use of physical restraints other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm or;
 - b. The withholding or forcing of food and other basic needs

Staff are responsible for reporting all incidents and accidents in a timely manner. This includes:

1. Incident and accident reports submitted within 24 hours of the event.
2. Alerting families through face-to-face interaction or email within 24 hours of the event, regardless of level of incident
3. Alerting the School Age Director to all incidents and accidents at a moderate or extreme level
4. Properly filling out and reporting mandated reports within 24 hours of an incident, which includes alerting the School Age Director before the end of the shift of a potential abuse allegation.

Staff will provide as much support to their participants as possible.

This includes:

1. Identifying rules for program spaces regularly, helping remind youth of their expectations
2. Maintaining consistent, well structured rules and schedules to help students adapt to ASC and Summer Child Care
3. Building relationships with all participants in the program by being fully, 100% engaged in all activities. This includes:
 - a. Sitting at the snack tables during lunch and snacking.
 - b. Running around in the gym and participating in games.
 - c. Being engaged will help children feel more comfortable addressing behavior with counselors when it does occur and will also empower youth to discuss problems and concerns with staff when they arise.