



# School-Age Program

## *Licensed School Age Programs*

**Amherst Youth and Recreation Department  
1615 Amherst Manor Drive  
631-7132 [amherst.ny.us](http://amherst.ny.us)**

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# SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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Dear Parent(s),

Welcome to the Amherst Youth and Recreation Department's Licensed Child Care Program! Whether your family is new to the program or a long-time participant, we look forward to working with you and your child(ren) in the coming year. Our relationship with you and your child(ren) is important to us, and we encourage you to participate in all that we have to offer, including our quarterly family dinners and other special events.

We know that you have a choice in selecting quality care for your child(ren) and we appreciate your trust and confidence in us. Our staff is committed to working together to ensure that your family has a safe and enjoyable experience in our programs. Please do not hesitate to communicate with your site director, their supervisors, or the main office if you have any concerns or there are additional ways in which we can support you. We are always looking to improve both our programs and our operations, and we welcome your input and suggestions.

The information in this guide provides all you need to know to ensure a successful experience for you and your child(ren). Please keep it handy and refer to it as necessary. Also make sure to check the sign-out table at program weekly for updates, calendars, and information on our outreach and recreation programs.

Again, thank you for choosing the Amherst Youth & Recreation Department. I look forward to seeing you and your child(ren) at program!

Sincerely,

Mary-Diana Pouli  
Executive Director

## **Amherst Youth and Recreation Mission Statement**

The mission of the Amherst Youth and Recreation Department is to serve youth and families through youth development, advocacy, prevention and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.

## **Amherst Youth and Recreation Vision Statement**

The Amherst Youth and Recreation Department envisions a caring community in a dynamic partnership with children and families who are healthy, safe and nurtured and where diversity is treasured and all are supported in fulfilling their potential.

## **Description of School Age Programs**

Pre-registration is required for all programs

Selection for this program will be based according to the following priorities:

- Children of single or dual working parent families.
- All other applicants (Town resident and non-residents). Town residents will receive priority over non-residents

## ***Recess and Summer Camp***

Our programs offer fun-filled educational activities, field trips, guest speakers, along with arts and crafts. Activities are designed to enhance each child's social, emotional and physical growth and development. Children are encouraged to develop new skills in a safe atmosphere of fun and fair play.

Recess camps operate 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. when Town of Amherst Elementary Public Schools are not in session.

Summer Camp Program operates Monday through Friday, June through August, 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Parents are responsible for transportation to and from camp and a brown bag lunch with a drink.

## ***After School Programs***

Homework, special weekly activities including cooking, educational games, exercise and structured group activities are a part of the regular program. A nutritious, healthy snack will be provided for all participants each day.

The after school program operates Monday-Friday, 2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. when elementary public school is in session. Children are bused according to their school district. Arrival time is dependant upon school dismissal time.

**The Directors of our programs are experienced and qualified. They are assisted by counselors who have been selected for their skills, personality, and experience in working with children.**

## **Parent/Family Orientation**

Before you make a decision about child care we strongly encourage parents and their children to visit the program site during normal operating hours. Staff will explain how the program works as well as provide a tour of the facility (non-registered parents will be required to sign the visitor log). Once registered, all parents will receive a welcome letter that will include all the information needed for your and your child to have a positive experience at our programs.

## **Expectations**

### ***Parent Expectations:***

1. To communicate regularly with program staff and check for messages on the sign out board daily.
2. To keep your child home when he/she is sick to allow him/her to recover comfortably.
3. To pay child care fees promptly, in accordance with stated deadlines.

### ***Staff Expectations:***

1. To provide emotional support, understanding, and assistance.
2. To provide clear rules and safety guidelines.
3. To provide positive adult role models.
4. To provide varied and enriching programs.
5. To provide open communication between home, school, and our programs.

### ***Children Expectations:***

1. To treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. To respect and listen to program staff and peers.
3. To save very active play and loud voices for the gym or outside.
4. To use toys appropriately, not as weapons or for aggressive behavior.  
**Please leave your toys at home.**
5. To use words rather than physical actions to communicate and solve problems.  
If you cannot solve a problem by yourself, ask a program staff or volunteer for help.

## **Activity options for all school age programs**

### ***Gym or outdoor play including/not limited to***

Active games emphasizing cooperative play, as well as soccer, kickball, touch football, basketball, hockey, wiffleball/baseball, and four square.

### ***Indoor activities including/not limited to***

Board games, table games, homework, social skills building activities, books, arts and crafts, drawing, music, discussion groups and guest speakers.

### ***Field trips, special projects, and special visitors***

Parents will be notified through the program calendar of special activities and events.

- Transportation will be supplied through local bus companies.
- Director or Assistant Director will be present on all field trips. Two way walkie-talkies or cell phones will be used for communication.
- Students will be assigned a buddy who they will stay with for the duration of the trip.
- Prior to leaving the program site, each counselor will be assigned a group of 4-6 students. Staff will be responsible for the supervision of their assigned group of students while on the trip.

- Attendance will be taken three times 1) prior to leaving site, 2) at designated location, 3) upon return.
- A first aid kit will be brought on all field trips. All medical policies and procedures in the parent handbook and staff manual will remain in effect during all field trips.

***High Risk Activities***

- The Directors or Assistant Directors will be present on all field trip outings. Two way walkie-talkies and cellular phones will be used during our field trips.
- Each student will be assigned a buddy who they will stay with for the duration of the field trip. Prior to leaving the program site, each counselor will be assigned a group of 4-6 students. Staff will be responsible for the supervision of their assigned group of students from the time we leave program until we return.
- Attendance will be taken at least three times: 1) before we leave the site, 2) at a designated location, 3) on upon return.
- A first aid kit will be brought on all field trips. All medical policies and procedures as stated in the parent handbook and staff manual will remain in effect during these field trips.

**Children’s Needs**

***Clothing***

Appropriate clothing and shoes (outdoor and gym) is a must for all school age programs. Outdoor play is a regular option throughout the year. During the winter season, children will need snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, scarves. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING.**

***Lunches***

During recess and summer camp, children are required to bring their own bag lunch, including beverage. A nutritional lunch is encouraged, with no soda or candy please. Please do not send lunches that need to be heated or refrigerated. Lunches will be stored in coolers.

***Labeled Backpacks, Water Bottles and Sunscreen***

These items should accompany your child each day to recess and summer camp.

***Groups***

All of our school age programs incorporate a multi-age philosophy. Activities are designed to meet the needs and developmental levels of the differing ages of the children in each group. Age, grade, maturity and developmental levels are considered at the beginning of each program. Group placement is at the discretion of the lead staff.

***Supervision of Program Participants***

When the school age child care program is in operation, an adequate number of qualified staff will be on duty to protect the health and safety of the children in care. The minimum ration of staff to children is as follows:

<u>Age of Children</u>	<u>Number of required staff per Number of children</u>
Through 9 years	1:10
10-12 years	1:15

**Pool and Waterfront only**

5 years	1:6
6-7 years	1:8
8-14 years	1:10

Children will never be left without competent direct supervision at all times. Children will be supervised when moving from one activity to another. Staff supervising a group will know who and how many children are in their direct care (a list of participants is used to keep track of groups). Staff will follow Department of Health staff to youth ratio when at the pool or waterfront activity.

***Drop Off, Pick Up, Sign In, and Sign Out***

During recess and summer camp, parents must accompany child into program at drop off. Children will be bused to the after school program according to their school district. You or the person you designate to pick up your child will be required to sign out and note the time of departure for all programs.

***Required Paperwork***

**All children must have the following paperwork on file before starting program:**

- child data sheet (registration form)
- pick up release form
- Parent responsibility contract
- income statement (Federal tax form 1040 as proof of income and residency)
- Income eligibility form (after school only)
- your child's immunization records (summer camp only)

**Each program requires separate registration paperwork.**

## **Parent Information**

### ***Daily Communication***

Daily verbal communication between staff and parents is encouraged. We welcome the opportunity to confer with you as needed. Parent bulletin boards/information tables are located at all sites, providing information regarding care as well as events occurring in the program and community.

### ***Parent Involvement***

Parents are welcome to visit the programs any time. Parents may also become involved by sharing your talents, being a guest reader, volunteering your free time as a helper, or donating items. Our agency has established relationships with a variety of community organizations including but not limited to:

Amherst Central School District, Amherst Task Force for Healthy Community & Healthy Youth, Amherst Youth Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County, Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo, Catholic Charities, Child and Adolescent Treatment Services, Concerned Ecumenical Ministry, Jewish Family Service, The Prevention Council of Erie County, Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo, Sweet Home Central School District, Williamsville Central School District

These partnerships allow the Youth and recreation Department to continue to provide quality programs and offer parents many options to become involved in their community. If you would like more information on how you can become involved please contact the program office.

### ***Parent Conferences***

The Program staff will offer to schedule parent conferences two times per school year. If at any time you would like to speak with the program or administrative staff, a conference can be scheduled at your request.

### ***Administration/Staffing***

The Amherst Youth and Recreation Department has a 23 member Youth Board which creates policy and meets bi-monthly. Parents are welcome to become a member of this group. The office personnel, including the director, program coordinator, and billing staff, are available to answer any of your questions and address your concerns. They can be reached at our administrative office. All of our programs are operated by highly qualified and experienced program personnel who regularly attend staff development and professional workshops. Employee retention is exceptional in our agency. All after school staff is required to attend a general program as well as site specific orientation. This orientation includes: staff expectations, staff behavior, health wellness and safety, administrative policies and site specific information

### ***Child's Attendance***

When your child is absent please call the program to inform the staff. This is important so that staff know where your child is and, in some cases, to prevent delaying group activities. If your child is absent from the after school program without parent/guardian notice, staff will make follow up phone calls to ensure the safety of your child.



## Program Policies

### *School Age Discipline Policy*

The Amherst Youth and Recreation Department's discipline philosophy is based on a proactive and progressive approach. Please review this policy with your child.

1. Ground rules will be made very clear to all staff and children.
  - Rules are developed each year at the beginning of program to give children ownership in the development. This helps build a stronger sense of community.
2. If children are having difficulty with the rules, the staff brainstorm alternative strategies and solutions.
3. If a child consistently breaks the rules and consequences are deemed ineffective, parents are immediately contacted.
4. If the situation continues, a parent/staff conference will be scheduled. The child may or may not be included, depending on the situation.
5. Follow-up conferences or a written contract may be necessary to follow improvement.
6. If the situation cannot be mutually resolved to meet family or program needs, the child will be dismissed from the program.

**\*\*Zero Tolerance Policy:** any physical altercation between two participants, or participant and staff. Parents will be contacted immediately and child will be removed from program for the remainder of the day and suspended for at least one day following the incident.

### *Health Policy*

If children are ill or cannot participate in daily activities, they should not attend our programs. However, children often become ill during the school day and arrive at our programs in need of immediate TLC and medical attention. When this occurs, you will be contacted and are expected to have your child picked up within the hour.

A child **should not** attend the after school or camp programs if any of the following exist:

- **Fever:** Fever shall be defined as an oral temperature of 100.0 or greater. A child may return to the program when he/she has been fever free for 24 hours without medication.
- **Diarrhea:** Diarrhea shall be defined as an increase in the number and consistency of stools compared to the child's normal pattern.
- **Vomiting:** Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- **\*\*Rash:** Any rash associated with fever, signs of illness, or behavior change until the physician has determined the rash does not represent a communicable illness or condition.
- **\*\*Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** Red rimmed eyes with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep or eye pain and redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye. Until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- **\*\*Impetigo:** Infected skin sores, until 24 hours after treatment has been administered.
- **Chicken Pox:** Until the sixth day after the onset of rash or until all the lesions have dried and crusted.
- **Head Lice:** Until the morning after the first treatment and all nits have been removed.
- **\*\*Scabies:** Until after treatment has been completed.

**\*\*These items warrant written verification that a licensed health care provider (physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant) has been consulted and that he/she approves that the child return to child care.**

### ***General Recommendations***

There is no evidence that the common cold, minor respiratory illnesses, and ear infections can be reduced among children in child care by any specific intervention, including exclusion from the program. Children need not be excluded for minor illnesses unless any of the previously listed conditions or any of the following exist:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
2. The illness results in greater care need than the program can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The child has other symptoms such as unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or any other signs of serious illness.

### ***Doctor's Visits/antibiotics***

A note is required from your health care provider after a medical appointment when a contagious illness is diagnosed. If antibiotics are prescribed, children must be on them for 24 hours before returning to the program unless a note for earlier return is provided by the health care provider.

### ***Medications/Special Circumstances***

The Department of Children and Family Services and the NYS Health Department require that all children receiving medication at any licensed school age program have a completed medical consent form on site. There will be at least one staff trained in the administration of medication at each site. Medical consent forms must be completed and signed by the child's physician and parent/guardian.

**Staff is not allowed to administer medication without a completed form.**

It is recognized that occasionally there may be a child attending our programs who has special health care needs which may require individual attention. When this situation arises, the staff, parent, and health care consultant will work together to devise specific protocols and recommendations for the individual child.

### ***Children with Disabilities***

The Amherst Youth and Recreation Department strives to enable individuals with disabilities to have meaningful, productive and fun program experiences. Participants are encouraged and expected to actively participate with their peers in a supportive environment. Each participant must have an updated assessment completed by our staff as part of the registration process. At that time any additional information requested (e.g., IEP, Behavior Plan, Release of information for the school) must be submitted. The Amherst Youth and Recreation Department is concerned about the safety and liability of all participants and staff and reserves the right to exclude individuals from a program who display aggressive or challenging behaviors that are inappropriate in the community or that could harm themselves or others.

### ***Pick Up Policy***

For the protection of your child(ren), we must have a written authorization and current phone numbers for the persons responsible for your child's daily release. Please list the names and relationship to your child of all persons authorized to pick up your child. A release form will be provided for you at the time of enrollment. The staff will be checking this list and will ask for photo identification from adults who are unfamiliar. Children will be released only to those adults who are designated on their pick up list.

Anyone picking up a child must be drug and alcohol free. If staff suspects anyone of being under the influence they will speak to the person privately suggesting other travel options. If the driver refuses, the Amherst Police will be notified.

### ***Enrollment Options***

There is no minimum number of days for enrollment in our after school or recess camps. In the event that a parent anticipates needing service for more than the agreed upon days during a week, the program supervisor must be contacted 24 hours prior to the day and approve the additional days. Approval will depend upon enrollment numbers and staffing on that day. If approved, you will be expected to pay the additional contract fee.

Summer camp registration is based on weekly attendance.

### ***Inclement Weather Closing Policy***

All school age programs will be closed when the Amherst, Sweet Home, and/or Williamsville Central Elementary Schools are closed due to inclement weather from the beginning of the day. In the case of inclement weather when schools are not in session, please refer to the following stations below. The closing will be announced between 6:15 – 6:45 a.m.

#### **Announcement will be made on the following radio/television stations:**

WGRZ TV Channel 2, WKBW TV Channel 7, WIVB TV Channel 4, WBEN Radio 930AM, WGR 55AM, Sister FM stations WKSE 98.5FM, WTSS 102.5FM, WNED 970AM

### ***Evacuation Plan***

The following procedures shall be followed in the event of fire, flood, sudden loss of heat or air conditioning, or any other event that is felt to threaten the health and safety of the children and staff to the degree that evacuation from the building is necessary.

1. Evacuation routes to an alternative location are posted at each program site. Lead staff is responsible for ensuring that the children and staff in their group safely evacuate the building to the prearranged location.
2. Daily attendance records and the information necessary to reach parents shall be maintained in a portable fashion and this information will accompany the children and staff to the off site location.
3. Once the children and staff have arrived at the off-site location, the director and lead staff member shall account for all present and correlate those present with the attendance record.

4. The director or assigned senior staff member is responsible for contacting parents and/or guardians of the children who have been evacuated.
  - Fire extinguishers are available and in working order at each program site.
  - Emergency lights are functional and illuminate exit routes at each program site.

### ***Emergency Procedures First Aid and Handling Injuries***

In the event of an accident or injury that appears to need emergency medical treatment, the following sequence of phone calls for medical assistance should occur.

1. First call: 911
2. Second call: Child's Parent/Guardian
3. Contact the Site Supervisor
4. Contact the Health Care Consultant

### ***Serious Injury***

In the event of a serious accident, injury or health-related emergency to a child in attendance at all programs sites; staff will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Remain calm and quickly assess the situation. Direct a co-worker to get the lead staff.
2. If the injury involves the head, neck or back, child will not be moved. If excessive bleeding occurs, staff will follow standard first aid procedures. The program supervisor is notified immediately. If the extent of injury appears serious, 911 is called and given a specific description of the situation and clear directions to the location. Immediately following, the primary parent/guardian is contacted.
3. One staff member will remain with the child at all times. The lead staff member on site will be responsible for executing these procedures, may accompany the child to the hospital if necessary, and work with the parent throughout the process.
4. Complete documentation of the event including an accident report and a listing of the staff members involved will be completed and submitted within 24 hours of the accident.
5. A follow up conference to review the events will take place and include the director and all staff members involved in the incident. The purpose of the follow up review conference is to ensure that policies and procedures were followed appropriately and to assess if there are any areas of the plan in need of improvement or alteration.
6. First Aid Kits will be restocked after each use and the contents will be reviewed monthly and kept up to date.

### ***Minor Injury***

1. In the event of minor injuries, standard first aid procedures will be followed.
2. Each site will have at least one First Aid/CPR trained staff scheduled at all times.
3. First Aid Kits are available at all on site sites and scheduled off site activities.
4. Accident/incident report are completed and submitted to the Health Care Consultant.

### ***Sick Children/ Communicable Disease/Symptoms***

Staff members at all sites are expected to monitor the children's health daily. The Youth Center has a written health policy regarding health symptoms that result in exclusion from the program (see health policy). If a child in attendance exhibits any of the stated symptoms, the child is isolated from his/her peers and the parent/guardian is contacted immediately. Parent/guardian is responsible to come or send an authorized adult to pick up the sick child within the hour. A staff member should remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse/Maltreatment***

All Amherst Youth and Recreation program staff are Mandated Child Abuse/Maltreatment reporters. If any staff has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or maltreated a report will be submitted to the child abuse hotline.

## **Financial Information**

### ***Parent Fees***

All programs are based on a sliding scale fee structure. Parent must submit a copy of their most recent Federal tax form 1040 or they will be billed at the highest step.

### ***Registration Fees***

- \$20.00 After School
- \$50.00 Summer Camp
- \$10.00 Recess Camp

### ***Billing***

After school families are billed one month prior to services rendered. Payment may be made by check, money order or credit card. You can submit a credit card authorization form for file and we will charge your card at the beginning of each month. You will still receive a statement of monthly charges.

Recess and summer camp fees must be paid in full by the due date or your child will be removed from the roster.

### ***After School Program Credits***

If your child is absent from our after school program and staff is notified by 1:30pm you may receive a credit. These days can be used for illness, personal time, etc. if you call before 1:30pm (10am on early dismissal) on the day in question, and credits are available on your account.

You will NOT receive compensation for unused credit days at the end of the school year. You will receive credits as follows:

### **Days enrolled per week**

### **Daily Credits per school year**

5	8
4	6
3	4
2	2
1	1

Families will not receive a daily credit if they have an outstanding balance on their account. Once the balance is paid there is no retroactive credit given. Any family that has late payments two months in a row must keep a credit card on file to secure their child's spot in our program. We will either charge the card on a monthly basis or only charge the card if payment is not made on or before the due date.

There are no credits given for absence from recess or summer camp programs.

Scholarships may be available to families who qualify.

***Late Pick Up Policy***

The school age sites close at 5:30 p.m (6:00pm for registered extended day). Please arrive prior to 5:30, allowing time for your child to gather their belongings and exit the building on time. For unregistered late pick-ups, the late charge is \$3.00 between 5:30-6:00pm and \$5.00 every 15 minutes past 6:00pm. Pick up after 6:00pm may result in removal from program. If you are late, the charge will be added to your next bill.

***Thank you for your interest in the Amherst Youth and Recreation Departments School Age Programs. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call our administrative office at 631-7132.***