

After School Childcare Programming

Northampton Public Schools

Program Handbook

School Year 2026–27



1. Program Overview

Program Description

This program offers after-school childcare programming to Northampton Public Schools students in grades K–5. We provide quality, affordable childcare with enrichment opportunities, running daily from 7:00–7:45 am at select sites and 2:10–5:30 pm at all sites.

The after-school childcare program aims to create a safe, nurturing environment where children feel heard and empowered to be themselves. Our staff work to model positive communication and actively engage participants in meaningful peer interactions. We believe that ample physical activity, creative outlets, and unstructured play are key to a positive after-school community, and that enrichment and social-emotional work support intellectual growth. We prioritize building relationships with individual participants and caregivers, and take a restorative approach to conflict resolution.

Program Goals

We believe the following elements contribute to a strong sense of community and belonging:

- Unstructured play time with activity choices
- Physical activity and movement
- Social-emotional learning
- Enrichment opportunities
- Strengths-based and restorative approach
- Community building with participants, caregivers, teachers, and administrators
- Caring and proactive staff who are responsive to each child's needs
- Regular communication with families

After School Clubs

Our program provides topic-specific Clubs for participants in grades 1–5. Clubs can focus on Visual Arts, Crafts, Sports, Performing Arts, Computer Programming, Robotics, Engineering, Science, Languages, Mindfulness, Cooperative Games, Nature, and more. Clubs are facilitated by teachers, paraeducators, program staff, caregivers, college students, and community members. Each club generally holds up to 12 participants.

Staffing

Per DESE's Quality Standards for Public School District Operated School-Age Child Care programs, we maintain a maximum staffing ratio of 13:1 for participants in grades 1–5 and 10:1 for Kindergarten. Kindergarten enrollment is capped at no more than 20 participants per site, in order to maintain our highest quality care for the participants. All enrollment is dependent on staffing. If staffing needs are not met, some families may be placed on our wait list while we work to hire additional staff.

Admission and Capacity

Our Site Coordinator and/or Program Director may request to meet with caregivers and the child prior to admission. Caregivers are encouraged to meet with the Site Coordinator prior to the start of the program.

For the 2026-27 school year, the Jackson Street Elementary, Bridge Street Elementary, and RK Finn Ryan Road sites will be capped at no more than 48 participants daily. Schools may elect to add additional spots pending space and staffing availability, with Principal and Director approval.

Participant Selection and Lottery Procedures

Eligibility and Seat Availability

- Capacity for after-school care programming is restricted and fluctuates annually per school based on participant requirements and current staffing levels.
- Participation is strictly limited to students actively enrolled in Northampton Public Schools.
- Caregivers must submit an individual application for every child by the established deadline.

Random Drawing (Lottery)

A random lottery determines enrollment whenever the volume of applicants exceeds our program capacity.

- The initial drawing occurs within 1 week of the initial application deadline. If vacancies persist, a subsequent lottery will be held as needed.
- Priority placement is granted to siblings of applicants, who will be admitted first if space permits.
 - Should sibling applications exceed available spots, a separate random drawing for these participants will occur first.
- Following the placement of eligible siblings, any remaining openings are filled from the general pool via random selection.

We kindly ask that you **do not include personal or financial hardships or identify whether your child has been identified as a participant with a disability** in your application, as these circumstances cannot influence the randomized drawing.

Waiting List

Applicants who are not offered an initial seat will be added to a waitlist. Their ranking is determined by the exact order in which their names were selected during the drawing.

Results and Confirmation

- Results, including seat offers and waitlist rankings, will be distributed to all families via postal mail.
- Please reach out to the Program Director if you have not received a notification letter within **one week** of the lottery date.
- Caregivers must confirm their acceptance by the date noted in the letter. **Failure to respond by the deadline results in the forfeiture of the participant's spot.**
- Admission to the program is contingent upon full and timely completion of the Registration Packet. **Failure to complete the registration paperwork by the deadline may result in the forfeiture of the participant's spot or delay in participant's start date.**

Final Enrollment and District Guidelines

- Final admission depends on the completion of all registration paperwork. Any omissions or false information may lead to dismissal. Lottery selection alone does not guarantee a spot.
- Caregivers of participants with disabilities are strongly encouraged to provide a copy of their child's current IEP or Section 504 Plan upon enrollment. Our team will review the participant's IEP and/or Section 504 Plan, along with any other relevant information, to determine what accommodations and supports are necessary to ensure the participant's safe and equal access to the after-school childcare program to which they have been accepted. Supports provided during the school day do not automatically apply to the after-school childcare program and will be determined based on the participant's individual needs and the nature of the program.
- Address changes must be reported to the school office promptly. Moving out of the district will trigger a re-evaluation of program eligibility based on residency requirements.

2. Policies and Procedures

Behavior Policy

All staff and participants will adhere to the Northampton Public Schools' [Code of Conduct](#).

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Northampton Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, place of birth, age, citizenship or immigration status, veteran status, political affiliation, genetic information, limited-English proficiency, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Program Dismissal and Termination Policies

The after-school care program is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, safe, and nurturing community for all participants. To ensure the highest quality of care and the safety of our participants and staff, the district may find it necessary to remove a participant from the program. Potential reasons for termination include unpaid tuition or fees, violations of program rules or expectations, or circumstances where the program is unable to safely and effectively meet a child's specific needs.

1. Tuition and Late Fees

Timely payments are essential to sustain our staffing levels and provide necessary materials for our daily activities.

- **Payment Schedule:** Families must adhere to the billing cycle established at enrollment, with all fees paid in full by the specified deadlines.
- **Late Fee Penalty:** A late payment fee of \$5 will be applied to any accounts not settled by the due date.
- **Program Removal:** If an account remains outstanding for more than 14 calendar days without an approved payment plan, the participant will be suspended. Continued non-payment will result in permanent withdrawal from the program, and the vacancy will be filled by the next family on the waitlist.

2. Behavior and Community Safety

We prioritize creating a secure environment for every participant. We expect all participants to follow the same restorative values and Code of Conduct during the after-school childcare as they do throughout the school day.

- **Restorative Approach:** For minor issues, staff will engage participants in problem-solving and maintain open communication with caregivers. This process includes verbal redirections, written notices, and individual family conferences.
- **Suspension and Dismissal:** If a participant's behavior consistently interrupts the program, or shows no improvement after intervention, they may be temporarily suspended from participation or permanently dismissed.
- **Immediate Termination:** The after-school childcare program may bypass intermediate steps and immediately remove a participant for serious infractions, including:
 - Physical aggression or violence toward peers or staff.
 - Elopement or leaving the supervised area without permission.
 - Bullying, verbal abuse, or discriminatory language.
 - Any behavior that creates an immediate safety risk.

3. Support and Individual Needs

The after-school childcare program is designed to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging experience for all participants. The program operates using established participant-to-staff ratios that support recreational activities and enrichment programming.

Individualized Accommodations

Northampton Public Schools is committed to providing children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in the after-school childcare program. When an admitted participant requires accommodations or supports to access the program, the after-school childcare program will review the child's individual needs, including relevant IEPs, Section 504 Plans, health plans, and other pertinent information, with the caregivers to determine what reasonable accommodations or supports are necessary to ensure the child's safe and equal participation.

Program Participation

Participation in the after-school childcare program is determined on an individualized basis. Northampton Public Schools will review each participant's individual needs and consider reasonable accommodations and supports necessary to provide meaningful access to the program. If, after an individualized assessment, the district determines that it cannot safely or appropriately meet the participant's needs within the structure of the after-school childcare program without undue financial burden or fundamental alteration of the nature of the after-school childcare program, the district may decline the participant's participation. Prior to making such a determination, the after-school childcare program will meet with the participant's caregivers to discuss the participant's needs and the supports and/or accommodations necessary to facilitate the participant's safe and equal participation in the after-school childcare program.

Commitment to Families

The after-school childcare program is committed to working collaboratively with families to support participants' wellbeing and success. Any decision affecting participation will be based on an individualized review of the participant's needs and the program's ability to provide safe and meaningful access for all participants.

Transportation

The after-school childcare program does not currently offer transportation nor does the Northampton Public Schools provide early or late-day transportation for after-school childcare program participants. If we begin offering transportation or field trips, all caregivers will be informed in writing, and signed permission will be required.

Field Trips

Before any off-site field trip, the Site Coordinator will:

- Approve field trip with the Program Director and school district
- Collect signed permission slips from caregivers
- Compile a list of all children with permission (and those without) and their emergency contact information
- Review medical needs for any participants participating in the field trip with the nurse
- Conduct a head count by name before participants board the bus, and again before departure

Field trip procedures follow Northampton Public Schools' Field Trip policy [IJOA](#) and guidelines. Caregivers will be notified in writing before any field trip, and written permission is required for their child to participate and to be transported.

Participant Records

A current, confidential record is maintained for each child in the program using the program's Childcare Management Software System, Brightwheel. The after-school childcare program can also access participant files through their home school with the written consent of a caregiver. Records are maintained for up to three years following termination from care.

Each child's record includes:

- Information form: child's name, date of birth, date of admission, caregiver(s)' contact information, current photo, school, classroom teacher, any pertinent health information
- Emergency contact and authorized pick-up persons
- Copies of any custody agreements, court orders, or restraining orders
- Caregiver consent for first aid and emergency transportation
- Name, address, and phone number of the child's physician or health care source
- Medication administration consents and logs
- Injury reports
- Parental consent for alternative transportation and authorized pick-up persons
- Parental consent for field trips

Confidentiality is maintained for all records.

Participant Data Privacy and Brightwheel

The after-school childcare program is committed to protecting participant information through purposeful and proactive measures. While certain details must be shared with external platforms to facilitate our programming, the after-school childcare program strictly limits this exchange to the minimum amount of data required for effective operation and the achievement of our educational goals.

Consequently, we only provide participant data to vendors who have executed a formal Data Privacy Agreement with the district.

3. Registration and Payments

Registration and Enrollment

For the 2026-27 school year, registration will be open from July 1st-15th, and families will receive an email and/or Parent Square post with registration information before registration begins. Registrations received after July 15th will be placed on the waitlist and admitted pending staffing and availability.

Clubs run in three sessions: Fall (September through December), Winter (January through March, and Spring (April through June). Enrichment Club sign ups will be sent out one month prior to the start of the next Enrichment Club session, and sign ups must be submitted by August 15th and December 15th, respectively.

Payment for Specialty Enrichment Activities

Families should be aware that certain elective activities, including focused workshops, athletic clinics, STEM-specific clubs, or 3rd party programs, may require fees that are **not covered** by standard after-school childcare program tuition.

- **Distinct Billing Cycles:** Costs for these elective offerings are handled through separate invoicing. Upon registering for a specialty program, you will receive a unique bill apart from your usual monthly statement.
- **Registration Confirmation:** A participant's placement in a specialty club is only finalized once the specific program fee is settled. Please observe the deadlines listed on the elective enrollment paperwork.
- **Participation Status:** Outstanding balances for these separate activities will result in removal from the elective. However, core after-school enrollment remains unaffected as long as the general tuition account is current.

Participant Schedules

Families must sign up for a consistent weekly schedule in order to participate in our programs. We offer flexible scheduling, so families can sign up for the days and times that work for them. Add-on days are available for a slight price increase (\$8/hr).

This is not a drop-in program. You must sign up in advance for Before and After School care and Clubs to ensure proper staffing ratios. To change your child's schedule, email your Site Coordinator with at least one week's notice.

Pricing

All families are charged a \$15 annual registration fee to be paid at the time of registration.

The after-school childcare program pricing: \$7/hour (Reduced Rate: \$5/hour)

Clubs: Included in the rate (\$14.50/day for 2:10–4:15pm, or \$23/day to 5:30pm). Some clubs carry an additional materials fee, noted on the registration form.

Half-Day Programs: \$35/day (Reduced Rate: \$20/day)

Sibling Discount: \$6/hr for each additional sibling

Drop-in Rate: \$8/hr (\$10/hr for less than 24 hour notice)

Payment Information

Charges are based on all scheduled hours each month, whether or not your child attends. Payments are due by the 20th day of each calendar month. You will receive an invoice with your current balance approximately one week before the end of the month.

Late payments are subject to a \$5 late payment fee.

Payment Methods

Payments will now be accepted through Brightwheel. Once you receive your invoice, please follow the payment instructions included on your invoice.

We accept payments online (preferred) or by check made out to the City of Northampton and sent in a sealed envelope to the main office of your child's school, addressed to after-school childcare program.

Sliding Scale / Reduced-Rate Payments

Families whose participants qualify for the district's free or reduced rate through Freshampton are eligible for reduced rates for all after-school childcare programs, including before school AKA "Early Bird" (at Leeds only) and Clubs. Families who qualify will receive a letter from Freshampton at the start of each school year.

Late Pick-Up Fee

All children must be picked up before 5:30 pm. If you cannot pick up your child on time, please call the school. If a child remains after 5:30 pm:

- Two staff members will remain with the child
- A staff member will attempt to contact the caregiver and/or authorized pick-up persons
- A late fee of \$1.00 per minute after 5:30 pm will be charged
- The late fee must be paid by the last day of that calendar month

Families may be asked to find alternative arrangements if tuition or late fees are unpaid or if late pick-up occurs four or more times in a school year.

Refunds and Cancellations

No refunds or credits are given if your child does not attend due to absence, school delay or cancellation, or early dismissal. Written notice of schedule changes, cancellations, or withdrawal from the program must be given at least seven days in advance. Refunds are issued as program credit and must be used by the end of the current school year.

4. Program Information

Daily Schedule

Before School (aka 'Early Bird') at Leeds only (7:00–7:45 am)

Participants are dropped off at the main entrance (lower entrance by the bus loop) any time after 7:00 am. Staff will greet participants at the door and ensure they get to morning arrival or breakfast at 7:45 am. Early Bird is a small, mixed-age group. Activities include games, building blocks, drama, and sensory play in the Cafeteria.

After School (2:10–5:30 pm)

Here is our approximate afternoon schedule. Each site may vary.

Kindergarten

2:15-2:30 Check-In and Story

2:30-3:15 Free Play on Playground

3:15-3:30 Snack

3:30-4 Centers / Activity of the Day

4-4:15 Clean Up and Pack Up

1st-5th Grade

2:15-2:30 Program Check-In, Bathrooms, Water Bottles, Snack

(Group Leaders pick up Clubs between 2:15-2:30)

2:30-3:45 Clubs* meet

3:45-4:15 Free Play

After-school Day

4:15-5:30 Free Play All grades K-5 with a variety of activity choices*

*Note: Every day is different! On outdoor days, we frequently organize group games or activities outside, such as hula hoops, sidewalk chalk, kickball, capture the flag, obstacle courses, art projects, scavenger hunts, Yoga, etc. We occasionally bring groups inside for special activities.

On Rainy/Cold Days, we may have groups in the Cafeteria, Gym, Library, Music Room, STEM Room, and/or Art Room, where we set up various centers or special activities for the kids to explore - drawing and coloring, art projects, building, Legos, gross motor games, dramatic play, sensory materials, quiet reading, STEM activities, etc.

Clubs

Our club offerings change 3 times per year. Registration for Clubs will be sent out approximately one month prior to the session start date. See below for dates of our fall, winter, and spring sessions.

Fall: August 31st - December 22nd, 2026

Winter: January 4th - March 26th, 2027

Spring: March 29th - Last Full Day of School

Activity Spaces

Activity areas are arranged to facilitate individual, small-group, and large-group activities, with clear pathways between areas. Quiet areas are available indoors and outdoors. Age-appropriate, varied materials and equipment are readily accessible to promote independent use by children.

- Gym: Physical group activities (dodgeball, basketball, dance, etc.)
- Cafeteria: Individual and group table activities (board games, Legos, drawing, coding, etc.)
- Art Room: Art activities (beading, painting, crafts) and small group activities
- Music Room: Small group work (theater games, coding, yoga, etc.)
- Library: Quiet space for reading, writing, or storytelling

On rainy or cold days, groups rotate between indoor spaces to ensure opportunities for both physical activity and quieter activities throughout the day.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

At 2:10 pm, participants are dismissed to their school's after-school childcare program check-in location, where staff will check them in by grade level and/or Club groups. Participants have 10–15 minutes to use the bathroom and fill water bottles and will be offered an afternoon snack (included in the program cost).

Dismissal / Pick-Up

The after-school childcare program is available until 4:30pm, with an extended day option to 5:30pm. Please pick up your child on time, as we rely on your accurate enrollment to maintain staffing ratios.

All caregivers must check out with the dismissal staff member before taking their child. New pick-up persons must be added to your child's contact list and must show identification at their first pick up. Email your Site Coordinator with any changes to pick-up permissions.

For safety, outside school doors must remain closed at all times. Please do not open the door for other families; they can ring the bell to be buzzed in. Caregivers may not walk through the building unescorted, and participants may not return to classrooms after dismissal time.

Your Site Coordinator will send out pick up information prior to the start of the program. When groups are out on the playground, caregivers should pick up their children on the playground. On indoor days, pick up at your site's pick up door. Ring the doorbell, and someone will let you in or send your child out to you. Check the sign on the pick up door for the current pick-up location.

Please let us know in advance if you are unable to walk around to the playground and we will be happy to dismiss your child to the main entrance. If you need your child ready at a specific time, call the office ahead of time.

Program Calendar

Start date for all programs: August 31st (No program August 26-28 for Staff Orientation and program set up)

The after-school childcare program follows the school calendar. Programs will NOT be held on the following holidays, professional development days, and early release days (Early Bird at Leeds Elementary still runs on early release days). Half Day Programs and additional programming days may be added at select schools pending space and staffing availability.

Holidays/Vacations--No School

- September 7 -- Labor Day
- October 12 -- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- November 11 -- Veterans Day
- November 26 and 27 -- November Break
- December 23-January 1 -- December Vacation
- January 18 -- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- February 15-19 -- February Vacation
- April 19-23 -- April Vacation
- May 31 -- Memorial Day
- June 18 -- Juneteenth

Professional Development/Work Days

- September 1 -- NO SCHOOL (PD) Primary Election
- November 3 -- NO SCHOOL (PD)
- January 22 -- NO SCHOOL (Work Day)

Early Release Days

- September 23 -- Half Day (Work Day)
- October 14 -- Half Day (Work Day)
- October 21 (Conferences)
- October 28 (Conferences)
- November 4 (Conferences)
- November 18 (Conferences)
- November 25 -- November Break (Half-Day)
- December 2 (Conferences)
- December 16 -- Half Day (Work Day) January 13 -- Half Day (PD)
- March 3 -- Half Day (Work Day)
- March 31 -- Half Day (Work Day)
- May 5 -- Half Day (PD)
- May 26 -- Half Day (Work Day)
- June 11 (Last Day of School TBC Pending Snow Days)

5. Program Evaluation

Family Input

There are various ways for caregivers to interact with and provide feedback for the program. Program evaluations will be sent out periodically, and families are encouraged to attend program events and community performances, and/or volunteer with the program.

Caregivers may request a site visit or conference with the Program Director and/or Site Coordinator prior to enrollment in the program.

Program Evaluation and Family Input

The after-school childcare program is dedicated to maintaining an exceptional and safe environment for our participants. To ensure we are consistently meeting the needs of our families and upholding program standards, we have established procedures for regular, comprehensive evaluations of our programming and policies.

The perspective of our families is a critical component of this process. We actively rely on input from caregivers to help us celebrate our successes and identify specific areas for growth and development.

Gathering and Utilizing Feedback

- **Surveys:** Caregivers will periodically receive a program evaluation form to provide feedback on safety, staff communication, and their child's overall experience.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Caregivers may request a conference with the Program Director or Site Coordinator at any time to share constructive suggestions or concerns regarding the program.
- **Child Participation:** Because the program is for them, we conduct age-appropriate reflection activities with participating children to learn which clubs and themes they enjoy most.
- **Program Improvements:** Your insights directly shape the future of the after-school childcare program, guiding our staff training, behavior management strategies, and enrichment partnerships.

Whether it is a note about a welcoming staff member or a new club topic, your feedback helps keep our program responsive and deeply rooted in the Northampton community.

Research Procedures

The program follows local school policy regarding the extent to which research may be conducted. Written parental permission is required before any research activities or special non-routine activities are conducted involving participants.

6. Health and Safety

Health Care Policy

The program adheres to the Northampton Public Schools district health care policy. The program complies with all legal requirements for the protection of children's health and safety, including sanitation, water quality, and fire protection. The health care policy is available to families upon request.

District health policies can be found at: [NPS Health Policies](#)

The Program Director and District Nurse or substitute are available on call at all times during program hours.

Posted Emergency Information

The following information is posted near all program telephones:

- Name, address, and phone number of the health care consultant
- Phone numbers for fire department, police, ambulance, nearest emergency facility, and Poison Control Center
- Name, location, and directions to the school
- Emergency and evacuation procedures

Health Requirements for Staff

All staff are trained in first aid and CPR and in the school's emergency procedures, including emergency evacuation. At least one staff member certified in first aid and CPR is on site at all times.

Emergency Protocol

All program staff carry walkie-talkies while on duty. The program supplies a first aid backpack carried by one staff member at all times. Additional first aid supplies are available from the nurse's office and are regularly replenished. Ice, EpiPens, and participant inhalers are available (locked) in the nurse's office.

- Minor first aid: The nearest staff member may attend to the injury and will inform the Site Supervisor as soon as possible.
- Medical emergencies: The nearest first-aid/CPR-trained staff member will act immediately. Staff will call 911 first, then notify the participant's emergency contacts.

Each site follows the emergency protocols of their home school and the district.

If a child becomes ill or injured beyond basic first aid, we will contact the participant's emergency contacts. In an emergency, staff will call for an ambulance first, then immediately notify emergency contacts.

Illness and Communicable Disease

A written policy outlines guidelines for the attendance of sick children and the protection of well children. The program notifies caregivers of all communicable diseases per Massachusetts Department of Public Health recommendations. The school nurse will determine if the local Board of Health should be notified.

Individual medical problems and injuries are recorded and reported to staff and caregivers. Caregivers are informed immediately of any injury or illness requiring medical attention beyond minor first aid. The program maintains centralized, confidential logs of injuries and health and safety concerns.

A space is available for mildly ill children.

Notification of a participant who has contracted an acute infectious disease will be given to the nurse or health care consultant.

Medication

As a general rule, the program does not administer medication to participants although exceptions to this rule will be considered to ensure an equal opportunity for participation of a child with a documented disability or health condition. Upon written request from a parent, a child may be permitted to self-administer their own medication under staff supervision. Children with asthma may carry their own inhalers with parental permission and use them as needed without direct staff supervision.

Hygiene

Children and staff wash hands after using the bathroom, before eating or handling food, after contact with body fluids, before and after water play, after handling animals or their equipment, and after cleaning materials or the environment.

All table tops, counter tops, kitchen surfaces, drinking fountains, and bathrooms are washed and sanitized daily.

Disposable gloves are provided for blood spill cleanup. After cleaning, the area is thoroughly disinfected, used gloves are placed in a lined, covered container, and staff wash their hands thoroughly. Bloodied clothing is sealed in a labeled plastic bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Attendance

Attendance is taken daily and records are maintained as part of each child's after-school childcare program records. Children may not participate in the after-school childcare program on days they are absent from school. If a child is dismissed from school early for an appointment, they may attend the after-school childcare program on that day only if they return before dismissal time.

7. Staff

Staff Hierarchy

- Program Director
- Site Coordinator
- Lead Staff
- Support Staff
- Interns / Volunteers

Hiring and Qualifications

The program maintains up-to-date written personnel policies and procedures provided to all employees. Personnel policies include:

- Criteria and procedures for hiring, promoting, probationary periods, disciplining, suspending, and dismissing employees
- Procedure for handling complaints from or about staff
- Provisions for vacation, holidays, leaves, and sick days
- Hours and job/duty descriptions for all positions
- Salary range and benefits for all positions

Personnel Records

A personnel record is maintained for each staff member with direct contact with children, including a resume or job application with documentation of education, employment history, and reference verification, as well as a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) report and a background check through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

Staff Training

All staff receive an orientation prior to beginning work, as well as 1st aid and CPR and other pertinent trainings. New staff receive orientation covering the program's philosophy and goals, emergency and health/safety procedures, specific needs of individual children as pertinent to their position, programming and daily activities, and expectations of ethical conduct.

Staff meetings are held regularly to consult on program planning, plan for individual children, and discuss program and working conditions.

Training requirements:

- Program administrators and site directors: minimum 10 hours of training per calendar year
- Lead teachers: minimum 5 hours per calendar year
- Assistant teachers/aides: pertinent training as deemed necessary by administration
- All lead staff and Site Coordinators: trained in first aid and CPR

The Director evaluates Site Coordinators annually, and Site Coordinators and/or the Director evaluate all program staff annually. Evaluations include direct observation of the staff member and interactions with children. New staff will receive a meeting and initial evaluation within 12 weeks of hire.

Volunteers and Interns

Our program welcomes interns and volunteers to work with us, and we may be able to work with colleges and high schools to arrange school credit. Volunteers and interns work under the supervision of our program staff and/or Site Coordinators at all times and must be CORI checked and cleared through VINS (Volunteers in Northampton Schools) in order to volunteer or intern with our programs.

8. Families and Caregivers

Family Involvement

We prioritize building relationships with families and encourage caregivers to be involved with the program in a variety of ways:

- Volunteer with the program
- Participate in family events and community performances
- Contribute donations
- Provide feedback through annual surveys and mid-year program evaluations

Staff are available for individual conferences with families and/or teachers at the family's request. Caregivers may request a site visit or conference with the Program Director or Site Coordinator at any time. To book a meeting, please email the Director.

Communication

The program maintains ongoing communication with families a regarding children's experience in the program:

- Verbal updates are shared with caregivers at pick-up. Feel free to request a meeting with your Site Coordinator at your pick up time.
- Unusual changes in a child's physical or emotional state and injuries are reported to caregivers
- Caregivers are informed of policy changes and critical program issues via email, Parent Square, or newsletter.
- Staff and caregivers communicate to ensure smooth transitions from the school day to after-school programs
- Staff observations of a child's experience during after school may be shared with school staff or classroom teachers when in the best interest of the child

Process for Orienting New Families

If you are new to the district, or just new to our programs, we invite you to learn more about our program by looking through our website. Our website, this program handbook, and the FAQ on our website probably has most of the answers to your questions.

All participants will receive an orientation during the first week of the program or the first week of their enrollment if later in the year.

Welcome to the After-School Program!