

**YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga (Inc.)**

# **Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers**

**Parent & Student Handbook 2024-2028**





## **2024-2028 Parent/Student Handbook**

### **Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers**

Dear Student, Parents or Guardian,

Welcome to the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers After-School Program (NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC). This handbook is intended to communicate the rules and guidelines of the program as a complement to YMCA Policies. We look forward to serving you and your child, if you have any questions, please feel free to call 706-935-2226.

#### **Purpose and Objective:**

To work hand-in-hand with the community to provide an after-school program in which children have the opportunity to learn, increase academic success and have fun in a positive and safe environment. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is an opportunity to complement and enhance a student's regular school day. After school staff support and communicate with the student's regular day teachers. The program offers homework help, academic enrichment, tutorial services, unique project based learning experiences, personal enrichment activities and snacks - with small class size ratios. We seek ways to help you help your child succeed in school. We utilize a variety of strategies to break down learning barriers at every turn. We support social and emotional wellness and work towards the goal of student success in school and in life.

#### **Recruitment, Enrollment and Retention:**

A Site Coordinator leads the day-to-day operations within each NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. The Site Coordinator promotes the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program during the school's Open House Night, other school functions, via emails, phone calls, and flyers. A registration form must be completed in its entirety and submitted before it can be processed. You may complete the registration process online.



Please contact the North Georgia Community YMCA office at 706-935-2226 or [ngaymca@ymcachattanooga.org](mailto:ngaymca@ymcachattanooga.org). Site Coordinators and school staff also send invitations and applications home with students who may need extra support. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is a voluntary program. Registration is open to all students. However, **priority is given to students who are most in need of academic help**. As applications are received, the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Site Coordinator reviews student's records and works with the regular day staff to identify students for the afterschool program. Parents/Guardians are contacted regarding acceptance to the program and further details. Please note that students may be placed on a waiting list. Site Coordinators continue to consult with school administration, day teachers, counselors, and special education teachers/directors throughout the year. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC also identifies at risk, special education students and students receiving IEP or EIP services. When a child is receiving IEP or EIP services, the Site Coordinators and special education day staff collaborate in order to provide appropriate accommodations for IEP and EIP students who participate in the program. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities are also offered and opened to private school students. To ensure that meaningful consultation with private school officials takes place, invitations to participate and consult with the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Project Director and staff take place prior to the program start and ongoing several times per year. Private school officials submit an "Intent to Participate" form. Consultation is ongoing. No child is denied attendance based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender or disability.

**Attendance Plan:**

Attendance is monitored daily and requirements strictly enforced to ensure regular attendance. Due to limited spaces, students who enroll but do not attend regularly will be removed from the program to open up a spot from the waiting list. Additionally, parents are asked to communicate to the Site Coordinator if a student will be withdrawing from the program. Seats that become available will be filled from the students on the waiting list (or new students recruited for available spots if applicable). New availability is announced to school staff and parents. No child is denied attendance based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender or disability. At day school dismissal, students transition to the designated location within the school for a healthy snack. Attendance is taken at that time and again during the first learning session. Regular attendance is very important in order for students to reap the full benefits of the program. Each day, students will participate in



engaging project based activities that promote overall school success. The small group learning environment allows for more personalization and opportunities for creative activities within the teaching environment. Home school and private school students who live within the school's attendance area are allowed attendance based on program criteria and priority.

**Communication:**

In order to be successful, this program MUST have open and regular communication across internal and external stakeholders (program staff, school personnel, community partners, students and parents, etc.). The program offers several opportunities and workshops for families each year. All family members are welcome and highly encouraged to attend. Family involvement is naturally related to retention and the ability to optimize services for the students and families. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program will keep the program website updated to keep the community updated about the program. All materials are made available in other languages when necessary.

**On-Site Opening Procedures:**

Each student will be checked in by the appropriate personnel at the beginning of the program. If there is no written note or communication from the parent about the student's absence, the student is expected to be at the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.

**Program Operation Hours and Schedule:**

The NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program operates from the school dismissal until 6:00 p.m.. A Site Coordinator at each school develops and maintains a comprehensive schedule that supports the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC purpose and objectives. The program runs during the school year and follows the regular school day calendar in terms of school holidays and inclement weather days. The program also operates for during the month of June during the summer. Please refer to your specific school regarding the days of the week and hours for the program.

**Alternative programming:**

Should the YMCA move to virtual learning, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC will also shift to a virtual program.

Programming will be offered during normal program hours and utilize the same schedule. Zoom and Google Meets links will be communicated to families. In cases of virtual learning, Site Coordinators



and staff will communicate via email with students and parents to ensure a smooth transition to virtual learning. Information will also be disseminated via the YMCA social media and website.

**English Language Learners:**

YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga collaborates with Catoosa County School District and Walker County School District staff and social workers to monitor mobility, identification, and needs of the ELL population. As these students enter the school system the Home Language Survey is completed by the school to determine the language of students. All ELLs are assessed annually on the state-adopted English proficiency measure with their continued eligibility for language assistance determined through a Language Assessment Conference (LAC). NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC hosts ongoing activities for all parents, including parents of ELL students. Every effort is made to inform the parents of ELL students of ways they can assist their students academically. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC follows the district's Translation and Interpretation Services Plan (as per under Title I or Title III) which guides staff in supporting parents in need of these services. Upon registration, the district asks parents to indicate their preferred language for receiving school information. To the extent practicable, communications are provided in the parent's preferred language. Resources available to translations and interpretation include Language Line, a phone based interpretation service with over 180 language options, a district-maintained list of approved interpreters (including sign language), and a contract with Carmazzi Global Solutions for professional translation of certain documents.

**Student Behavior:**

YMCA's NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC generally follows the Policies and Procedures as described per the YMCA **After School Program Manual**. However, program policies and procedures may be more stringent. Please remember that NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is a voluntary program, intended to create a healthy, safe, and upbeat learning environment and allow for robust academic enrichment activities and enjoyment for enrolled students within smaller groups. Therefore, behavior that does not support or interferes with this environment is unacceptable. A positive program climate is highly important for positive learning, therefore, violations of the Student Code of Conduct levels I, II, and III (no matter the level of offense) are subject to discipline which could include removal from the program for a determined period of time or permanently. One Discipline Referral could result in removal from the program. School



administrators will be notified. Parents will be notified. Re-entrance into the program is not guaranteed. Students are expected to participate fully in the program learning process; show respect for the knowledge and authority of site coordinators, teachers, other students, and auxiliary personnel; and show concern for and encouragement of educational achievements and efforts of others. Staff are trained in (1) clear expectations for students, (2) staff understanding of social and behavioral dynamics, and (3) a collaborative approach (student, staff and parent) to reward good behavior. Application of disciplinary measures will at all times reflect fair and reasonable exercise of authority, being neither arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, nor otherwise unreasonable. Procedural due process, to the extent applicable in any particular situation, will be afforded all students. Discipline records are a part of a student's confidential record and are protected by FERPA guidelines.

**Bullying Policy:**

Bullying will not be tolerated. All bullying reports will be handled by the Bullying Protocol outlined in **YMCA After School Program Manual**. All students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All schools within the YMCA have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff, and volunteers. Student behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another student through words or actions; in person, in writing, or in the form of cyberbullying. **YMCA After School Program Manual** prohibits bullying, harassment, and intimidation and is printed in the student/parent handbook and made available to students, parents, and staff at the beginning of the school year.

**Transportation, Car-Riders, Check-out, Pick-up:**

Ensuring the safety of all afterschool students is a priority of the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. ID's will be checked and only authorized individuals will be allowed to pick the student up.

**Early Check-outs** are strongly discouraged. However, if students need to be checked out early, the parent/authorized person must enter the reception area and sign the child out – no exceptions. The person at the desk will call for the child. The child will not be called until AFTER signed out and the parent/authorized person must wait inside for the child. A child will not be released to anyone who is not authorized as listed in Infinite Campus. Photo IDs will be checked. In order for all children who



are registered within the program to benefit from attending, habitual early check-outs may result in a student being removed to open up a spot on the waiting list for someone who can benefit from the program in its entirety. Additionally, early check-outs will only be allowed during 2 of the 3 program hours. If students are habitually checked out prior to 2 hours, the student may be removed from the program.

**Parent and Family Engagement:**

The NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs have on-going communication with parents. A minimum of 5 parent literacy-related events shall be held each year. Parent involvement is defined as the participation of parents in regular, 2-way, meaningful communication involving learning. Site Coordinators engage in ongoing 2-way communication with parents about their child's experiences, successes, and challenges within the program. Parent events are designed to help parents who need literacy-related services themselves and to help parents participate in their child's learning. The goal is to ensure that parents and families receive extraordinary services and experiences that will lead to improved academic achievement and support for the whole child.

**Civil Rights:**

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga and NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, or in its employment practices, student programs and dealings with the public. It is the policy of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IDEA and all accompanying regulations. The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender or disability or by any employee or student. This policy also applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

**Program Evaluation/Student Progress:**

Progress is measured through academic grades in ELA, reading & math, state assessments, student/teacher surveys, attendance, & student / parent focus groups. Students participate daily in small groups, grade level activities, a transition time from school day, snacks and rotation through a series of learning sessions. Specific site activities are based on need & interest and time for



homework help. Program adjustments and revisions are implemented based on formal and informal evaluation results, academic progress data, and student interest. Personal enrichment sessions, recreation and wellness opportunities ensure that we are addressing the "whole child." Outside Program Evaluators provide evaluations to the Project Director, who reviews for accuracy & approves. Completed reports are forwarded on to grant staff, principals & stakeholders. A copy is available at all times and posted on the website. Financial reporting is produced by the Grant's Finance Coordinator. The Project Director reviews /approves the report. The Project Director sign the report when satisfied with the accuracy of the report.

**Field Trips:**

On occasion, NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC students may participate in field trips following normal school district procedures. Site Coordinators coordinate the trips to be approved by the Program Director. Comprehensive emergency protocols are in place and span across all sites. To obtain a copy, please contact the Site Coordinator at your school or the North Georgia Community YMCA office at 706-935-2226 for more information.

**Wellness:**

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC partners with several community resources who provide educational sessions on topics such as good nutrition, risky behaviors, dental health, exercise and hygiene.

**Community:**

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC links with numerous community partners to strengthen opportunities to serve our families/students; in order to provide the most robust after school experience possible. Volunteers from the community (and parents) are welcome and may help with programming. However, all volunteers (and staff) must have a clear national background check on an annual basis prior to working with students.

**Cell Phones:**

Generally, cell phones are to be turned off or placed in the vibrate mode during after school (staff and students). Staff and students are expected to refrain from personal cell phone usage with the exception of emergencies, outstanding circumstances or academic games led by adult instructional





staff. Students and Staff members will not be called to the telephone except in cases of emergency.

In less urgent cases, the office staff will be happy to relay a message.

**Illness:**

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC reserves the right to release a child if he or she appears too ill to participate in the After School program or is considered contagious. NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC will notify the child's parent or emergency contact and request that the child be picked up within a half hour. If the child has not been picked up within the allotted time, NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC reserves the right to take any necessary action to ensure the health and safety of the child. For the 2021-2022 school year, NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC will follow the COVID-19 procedures set forth by the district. These procedures follow the Georgia Department of Public Health's guidelines.

**Emergency Preparedness:**

A minimum of six emergency drills (fire, weather, lock-down) are conducted during the school year and during NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC after school hours. Drills are taken very seriously; all staff and students participate. These drills assure that students and staff are aware of the plan for as it pertains to after school – especially since students and staff may be utilizing rooms other than what they are accustomed to during the school day.

Each after school teacher has an emergency envelope near the doorway of his/her room. This folder includes a copy of the emergency communication information. Each classroom has a copy of the YMCA Emergency Codes. Each classroom has a fire drill evacuation route map posted near the classroom door and one in the emergency envelope. Every classroom has a copy of the Safe Areas for Severe Weather locations posted near the door and in the emergency procedures envelope. This is the location used in case of a severe weather announcement or other emergencies. Students and staff must follow proper procedures.

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff are also trained on other possible emergency situations: playground supervision, CPR/AED, first aid, Epi-pen, seizures, field trip emergencies, active shooter, suicide protocol. There is a chain of command protocol in place should a live emergency situation take place. Chain of command is specific to the type of emergency and may include staff, site coordinator, school administration,



project director, assistant superintendent, and student services.

School doors remain locked at all times and individuals entering the building must be let inside by a YMCA staff member for security.

### **Confidentiality of student information:**

The YMCA has an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of student information. Staff receive formal training on an annual basis. In NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, only the Program Director or Data Specialist can access student information to register students, monitor grades, attendance, transportation and parent contact information. Staff will not disclose, publish or disseminate any information in any form (electronic, printed, verbal, written, etc.) that is obtained under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Georgia State Statutes or developed for YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga related to the personal information of the participants at the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC without the prior written authorization of the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. Staff will not use, publish or disseminate any information or work product available for personal use, nor will provide it to a third party for their use. Staff further agrees to take all reasonable precautions to prevent any unauthorized use, disclosure, publication or dissemination of any materials as stated above. In addition, failure to comply with this policy shall result in suspension or termination from employment and/or access to any and all NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities in the future. Staff are trained annually on FERPA and sign a confidentiality agreement upon hiring.

### **Child Abuse Reporting:**

All NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC employees are **Mandated Reporters** and required to report known or suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or dependency and, to the extent possible all acts alleged to have been committed by any adult against a child that would constitute abuse, neglect or dependency if they were perpetrated by a child's parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker. The report shall be made immediately at the time the employee becomes aware of or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected. The employee must make the report to the school counselor or to an administrator. If the school counselor and administrators are not in the building, the report should be made to the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Site Coordinator or the Program Director; or to the Student Services Department.

**Sexual Harassment:**

YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga will not tolerate sexual harassment of its students or employees. Persons found to be in violation of the sexual harassment policy shall be subject to disciplinary action which may include for employees, but is not limited to, written warning, demotion, transfer, suspension or dismissal, and for students' appropriate forms of discipline as found in the Code of Conduct. Complaints against non-school personnel shall be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

**Supplanting:**

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds will be used to provide services not being provided by Title I or any other Federal, State or local funds that the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga or the contributing partners might receive. Funds will **supplement** (increase) current funding **not supplant** (replace). YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga cannot use these funds to supplant funds that would, in the absence of NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds, have been spent on participating students.

**Partners, Advisory Council and Communication:**

The YMCA's numerous community partners provide resources to assist staff in serving students. Contact your Site Coordinator. The Partnership Collaborative lists the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC centers as a resource in all their publications and on their website, and a monthly update is given at the Partnership meetings where members are made aware of the program and asked to encourage families to participate. Websites and newspaper articles keep the community informed about activities and successes. An Advisory Council made up of internal and external stakeholders (The Partnership Board) meets monthly; the Project Director provides the Advisory Council with reports which are included in meeting minutes. An external evaluator submits a NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC formative evaluation in January and a NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC summative evaluation in June. The reports are presented to the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council makes recommendations and the final report is released to the stakeholders; school personnel, NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff, parents and partners. Copies of reports are made available to the public at each school office and on the website. The Project Director is responsible for ensuring information is disseminated. All materials are translated for families where a language barrier exists. All attempts will be made to communicate with families in students' primary



language.

### **Reporting Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Noncompliance:**

NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC provides a confidential means for reporting suspected wrongdoing involving fraud, waste & abuse of and school assets or resources. Reportable activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Neglect of duty - Noncompliance with applicable rules, laws and regulations; misuse or abuse of time during work hours.
- Misuse of Property - Negligence in the care and handling of property, unauthorized or inappropriate use of property or equipment, intentional abuse or destruction of property, theft of property, or of another employee's property.
- Falsification of Information - Falsification of personnel records, time records, or any other employee record or report.
- How to report Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Noncompliance Complaints:
- If unsure how to proceed with a concern, contact John Donahoo, District Vice President during normal business hours at 706-935-2226 for guidance prior to completing the [Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Noncompliance Reporting Form](#)
- **In person or writing:** The Finance Department is located in the North Georgia Community YMCA at 1735 Battlefield Parkway, Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742
- **By phone:** 706-935-2226.
- **Online:** Complete and submit the [Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Noncompliance Reporting Form](#).
- We define abuse, fraud and waste as:
- "Abuse" means the excessive or improper use of something, or the employment of something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use; the intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources owned or operated by the locality; or extravagant or excessive use so as to abuse one's position or authority.
- "Fraud" means the intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization or organizations, either internal or external to local government that could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the locality or could cause



detriment to others or the locality. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive.

- "Waste" means the intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of resources owned or operated by the locality to the detriment or potential detriment of the locality. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.
- "Noncompliance" means not following guidelines set forth by local, state and federal regulations and grant requirements.

**Complaint Procedures Regarding the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC:**

Please try to resolve complaints with NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC or the school district before moving forward on a formal complaint. For complaints about NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC please call the Program Director at 770-207-3173 for resolution or for a copy of the complaint form. To initiate a formal complaint, a person must submit the Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Complaint Form to the North Georgia Community YMCA. This complaint form may be obtained by contacting the Program Director for North Georgia Community YMCA at 706-935-2226 or 1735 Battlefield Parkway, Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742. You may also contact the Program Manager, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, GA Department of Education office at (404) 232-1197.



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**YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga (Inc.)****Nita M. Lowey – 21st Century Community Learning Centers****Handbook Acknowledgement Page**

Student/Parent/Guardian Consent and Agreement: In the event I am unable to be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the appropriate medical personnel, selected by the Director, to provide medical treatment deemed necessary by such personnel. My signature below signifies that I give permission for my child to be transported by the NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC After-School Program if needed.

In consideration of the participant being permitted to enroll in the program, I hereby release, indemnify, and hold harmless NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, its employees, operators, counselors and instructors from any and all claims and demands, costs, charges, and expenses for harm, injury, damage, or loss which may be sustained by the participant as a result of or relating to participation in NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC.

**I have received my copy of the Parent / Student handbook. I understand that this handbook is not a complete statement of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga's policies and procedures, but is a summary guide meant to complement school board policy. Moreover, changing circumstances may require modifications to this handbook or the benefits it summarizes, and NML 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga reserves the right to modify, delete or improve any of the benefits or policies at any time without notice.**

**I HAVE READ AND I UNDERSTAND**

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Name** \_\_\_\_\_