

PRIME TIME AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK Town of Amherst



Amherst Recreation

Business Office 413-259-3065
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Crocker Farm Elementary School
280 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002
413-362-4075

(After School On-site Cell Number) 413-259-3177 (site coordinator) Grace Marczuk

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Description

The Amherst Recreation Department operates the Prime Time After-School Care Program at Crocker Farm Elementary School. Our program is licensed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care (EEC) and adheres to all its policies and procedures. Amherst Recreation does not discriminate in providing services to children on the basis of ethnicity, political or religious beliefs, color of skin, sexual preference, gender identity, physical or mental disabilities and/ or economic status. We operate out of the Crocker Farm Cafeteria and have access to the school’s outdoor playground and sports facilities, gymnasium, computer lab, art room and music room. Primetime is open every day school is in session and

parallel the school calendar. The operating hours are 2:40 – 5:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. If school is closed early for any reason, the program will **not** be held.

On very rare occasions the program may be canceled because of inclement weather, or dangerous road conditions.

Program Statement of Purpose and Philosophy

The Prime Time After School Program provides a fun, explorative, supportive, safe, and carefully supervised environment where children can take part in a number of recreational and educational activities. The program is divided into 3 groups by grade. Our K-1 and 2-3 groups offer a range of structured, age-appropriate activities on top of unstructured play times. The grades 4-6 section is less structured, allows for more choices, and offers activities geared for older elementary school children. We believe that diversity and inclusion bring strength and understanding to a community. Our program's goal is to provide an educationally sound and well-balanced program that extends supports for all children to succeed academically and socially. Prime Time is committed to the personal development of each child, encouraging skills in communication, cooperation, multicultural understanding, and self-expression.

Program Fees

The current fee (2023-2024) is \$84.00 per session per child. A session is one day a week per month. Full time registration (5 days a week) is \$378.00 a month. The total cost of the after-school program is divided by 10 monthly payments (September to June). **Monthly payments are due by the 1st day of the month of service.**

Fee Policies, Withdrawals, Day Changes and Refunds

1. Please note that registrations are for the full school year.
2. If you need to withdraw from the program, or change days of care, you must do so **in writing prior to the month for which the changes take effect. (I.e. we must receive your written withdrawal for October in September.)**
3. Monthly fees are not prorated.
4. Withdrawals and day changes will take effect on a monthly basis and are subject to a \$10 surcharge per transaction per child. Though we will bill you monthly as a reminder, **be aware that your monthly fee is due by the first day of the month of service.**

Vacation Weeks

There are full day programs available during winter (3rd week of Feb.) and spring (3rd week of April) vacation for additional fee. Parent/Guardian must sign your child separately for the day camps. Fee subsidy is available for families who qualify. Vacation camp hours are 8:30am-4:45pm Tuesday through Friday. Children need to bring 2 snacks and lunch. All food must be nut free in accordance with ARPS Policies.

Help for Low Income Families

Amherst Recreation offers fee reductions of up to 50% to qualified Amherst residents. If you believe that you are eligible for fee assistance, we encourage you to apply prior to enrolling. For application information, please call us at 413-259-3065. Child care vouchers are also accepted. Contact FCAC @ 413-772-2177 or 877-366-9096. You can also contact them at www.fcac.net

Program Curriculum

Prime Time incorporates activities that promote critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, teamwork, and communication. At least once a week, each age group participates in a cooking/food activity, science projects, arts and crafts and a structured sports activity. Our youngest group also enjoys music activities where they learn about rhythm from around the world as well as some dance movements. As a part of our curriculum, we offer daily (weather permitting)

free time outside where children can join in activities such as basketball, soccer, football, Frisbee, jump rope or play on the playground and/or fields.

We offer homework help on a daily basis, for children who are motivated to do so on their own as well as students who need a little extra support per parent or teacher request. If you would like homework to be included in your child's routine, please ask Prime Time staff for a homework contract.

Last but not least we take pride in our organized field trips. For the past 8 years, we have visited an orchard for apple picking, we have solved puzzles at Mike's Corn Maze, gone bowling as well as ice skating. All field trips are included in the fees, so there is no extra charge. In order to keep all parents well informed we collect consent in writing for specific field trips a week prior to the field trip.

Other activities may include guest speakers and theater performances. We take advantage of many youth oriented offerings through UMass, such as visits from the science outreach club and a "Day of Play". For more information, please see our Welcome Letter on our website – www.amherstmarec.org

Program Staffing

The on-site staff includes a site coordinator and group leaders. In addition, volunteers and interns from local colleges sometimes join the staff to bring diversity and energy into the program. All of the staff comply with the EEC regulations, including possessing appropriate credentials and training. All staff undergo a thorough background check, including criminal offender and sexual offender (CORI) state background checks. The staff meets on a regular basis to plan and evaluate activities and curriculum which creates a full, diverse, and exciting program. Parent input, suggestions, comments, and talents are always welcome, and will enrich the program. All staff members are available to parents for discussion on a daily basis. This will help you, the parent or guardian, to know the staff, and the staff will be able to better support and know your child.

Snacks

We Are Nut Free

A nutritious snack is served daily at no extra charge. If you would like to send a snack with your child, please feel free to do so. It is imperative that we are informed of any allergies your child/ren may have.

Clothing, Belongings and Toys

Children should wear clothing appropriate to the day's weather and come to the after-school program dressed to play. Sneakers are recommended! It is strongly advised that your child's clothing and belongings be labeled with his or her full name. **We go outside almost every day including winter time, so appropriate clothes are a must.** There is a "lost and found" at Crocker Farm outside of the cafeteria. Please note: Prime Time assumes no responsibility for lost articles. We ask that children leave toys and games at home. This includes cards, electronic games, cell phones and other similar items. If an item is brought to the program and poses distraction, it may be taken away by a staff member and returned to the parent/guardian at pick up time. Prime Time staff will NOT be responsible for get lost, stolen or broke home toys/games.

Pick-Up Policy

Our program ends at 5:30pm. Parents/guardians are required to pick up their children by that time.

Parents/guardians expecting to be late must call the program or arrange for an emergency contact to pick up their child(ren). If the person picking up the child(ren) is not listed as one of the emergency contacts, the parent/guardian is obligated to inform the site coordinator in writing (via email, handwritten note) in advance. A phone call is only acceptable in emergency situations.

There is a \$10 late fee for the first five minutes you are late to pick up your child. Additionally, there is a \$1.00 charge for every minute after the first ten. The total/summary of the late fee will be added to the parent's monthly statement.

Amherst Recreation reserves the right to terminate a child from the program whose parents/guardians are habitually late picking up their child. In the event that the child is not picked up, the Site Coordinator will call the parent or guardian using all provided numbers. If there is no response, 2 staff members will stay with child and call the provided emergency contact numbers. If no one is reached and no one has come to pick up the child after a period of 45 minutes, the Site Coordinator or Outreach Director will contact either the Amherst Police or the Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) and will ensure your child's safety while they attempt to reach you.

Continuous late pick up of child: Parents will be informed of pending termination due to late pick-up of children.

Parent/Guardian Visits

Parents/Guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit the program at any time during operating hours.

Parent/Guardian Complaints

If a parent/guardian has a complaint, or input regarding the program, it should be discussed with the Site Coordinator. The Coordinator has the responsibility to respond individually to the parent's concern. Please contact Grace Marczuk, via email at Marczukg@amherstma.gov or by telephone (413)259-3177. If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the Coordinator's decision or response, they can contact the Amherst Recreation Outreach Director Becky Demling at, 413-259-3151, or via email demlingb@amherstma.gov

Child Absences

If your child is absent from school, there is no need to notify the program. However, if your child is present in school, but will NOT be attending the program, **you must** notify the program in writing (send a note with your child and have them put it in the Prime Time box in the school office), or you may also email the Site Coordinator at Marczukg@amherstma.gov or call at 413-259-3177 (site coordinator office) or the Primetime cell 413-800-5390.

Tax Letters/Info

Tax letters covering fees paid for child care services are provided upon request only. Please contact our office: 413-259-3065

Early Release & Curriculum days and Snow Day Policy

If the public schools close due to inclement weather the child care program will be closed as well. If there is an unscheduled early release at school there will be no After School Program.

Prime Time will offer child care on early release days from 12:30. However, we are not open for Curriculum days and holidays where there is no school. The ARPS School calendar can be found [here](#).

In case of severe weather please call Amherst Recreation at 413-259-3065 to ensure operating hours. If there is a State of Emergency there will be no program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Health Policy

The Prime Time After School Program has a detailed health policy available to parents/guardians on request. The Coordinator and Group Leaders are responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Please contact Site Coordinator or Outreach Director immediately with any concerns.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, the staff will contact the child's parent/guardian. Depending on the severity and/or symptoms, you may be asked to pick up the child ASAP. In case the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or the

parent is unable to pick up the child right away, the next person on the emergency list will be contacted. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to report any contagious diseases, condition or serious illness to the Site Coordinator. The identity of the child will remain confidential. Specific cases may require health provider's note before they can return to the program.

Emergency Health Procedures – Serious Injury

In the event of an emergency, the following steps will be taken:

1. The staff member who reached the injured child will stay with the child. The child will not be moved unless the child is in further danger of being injured. A First Aid trained staff member will administer first aid if needed.
2. The First Aid trained staff member will determine if medical assistance is required and assign another staff member to call for an ambulance if needed.
3. Transportation will depend on the requirement: ambulance, parent/guardian, designated alternate.
4. The child's information form accompanies the child if medical treatment is needed.
5. An accident report is immediately completed and given to the parent/guardian within twenty-four hours. A copy is filed in the child's records. EEC will be notified in the event of serious injury or death, and written notice will be sent to the EEC within forty-eight hours, pursuant to regulation 11.09(13).

Minor Injuries

A First Aid Certified staff member will treat minor injuries on site. The injury is entered in the central log, and accident reports are completed and given to parent/guardian within twenty-four hours, and a copy is placed in the child's file.

Contagious Illness

Parents/Guardians are responsible for informing the program of any contagious condition experienced by your child. If the staff determine that a child may have a contagious condition, the child will be excused from the program until evidence of treatment to correct the condition, and/or note from a physician is received.

Emergency Information

It is very important that the program has accurate information during emergency situations. Please fill out the information form completely and accurately. Please inform the Site Coordinator of changes to home or work phone numbers, emergency contact person's information, as well as any new health issues, or changes that affect the pick-up of your child.

Emergency Procedures if the Parent/Guardian Cannot be Contact

If medical treatment is warranted and needed immediately, an ambulance will be called. If there is a question on immediacy of treatment the health consultant will be called and recommendations followed. Alternate emergency contact will be notified by phone if needed.

Medication Administration Procedures

All medication (prescription and non-prescription) shall be given to the Site Coordinator with a written parental/guardian authorization which indicates that the medication is for their child. No prescription medication will be administered without a written order from a physician: please be advised that in order to comply with EEC (Early Educational Care)

regulations parent/guardian will have to fill out Individual Health Care Plan Form, which can also be found our website – www.amherstmarec.org Parent or prescribing physician completes must fill out the form. If parent/guardian fills out the form than a written order from the doctor’s office must be attached to indicate that the medicine is for the child and specify the dosage, number of times per day, and number of days the medication is to be administered. The medication will be administered by the Director/ Site Coordinator/or designated staff (trained in “EEC 5 rights”), as directed on the original container unless so authorized by a written order of the child’s physician. However, if your child uses an inhaler for asthma, s/he may, with written parental/guardian consent and authorization of the physician, carry their own inhaler and use it as needed in the presences of after school program, who will enter the information to the child’s administration medication log.

All medications are kept in their original container with the child’s name, name of drug and directions for its administration and storage. Medications without original container won't be accepted: inhalers or any other medications in a zip lock bag with the child's name, but without the original box cannot be accepted. This is again based on the EEC regulations to which we comply. A written record of the administration of any medication, prescription or non-prescription, is kept in the child’s administration medication log. All medications are stored out of the reach of children in a secure and sanitary manner. Refrigeration of medications is available if required.

All consent forms are valid for one year from the date are signed.

All remaining or unused medication will be returned to the parent.

There are no exceptions to this policy. If there is no written authorization from the parent or/and physician, we will not dispense any medication to any child. Each form must be filled in clearly and completely, including signature and date, prior to the child’s first day. Enrollment will be paused until all required documents and medication are turned in.

Abuse and Neglect Policy

Prime Time Personnel are considered mandated reporters by the State and are therefore required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect. Reports of suspected abuse will be made to EEC and/or the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Abuse is defined as: the non-accidental commission of any act upon a child which causes or creates substantial risk or serious physical or emotional injury or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth. Neglect is defined as: the failure, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to adequately care for, protect, or supervise children.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

Referral Services

Prime Time staff can refer parents/guardian to appropriate social, mental health, educational and medical services, including but not limited to dental check-ups, vision or hearing screening for your child should the staff feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child. If a staff member feels an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child, they will first inform the Site Coordinator. The Site Coordinator will inform the parent/guardian and make the appropriate referral recommendations to the parent/guardian. Staff will observe and record information related to a child’s behavior that may necessitate referral. This information will be kept in the child’s file and shared with the Site Coordinator, Outreach Director and the parent/guardian. The Site Coordinator will meet with parent/guardian to share concerns, and observation and make a formal written referral. The staff will also assist the family in any process if needed. A current list of referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services is available on program site and online at <https://amherstmarec.org/345/PrimeTime>

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Behavior Management Policy

The Prime Time After School Program follows a behavior management policy that gives positive guidance, allows for redirection of negative behavior and sets clear behavioral limits. Our behavior management policy is designed to assist the child in the development of self-control, self-respect and respect and consideration for the rights and property of others. We believe that an interesting and challenging program, along with clear communication and cooperative relationships with parents/guardians and children will help minimize discipline problems.

Minor offenses are those which result in 2 to 3 timeouts within the course of one activity period (kickball, art, etc.). Site Coordinator or a group counselor will informally report incident to parents or guardians at time of pickup.

Major offenses are those which include but are not limited to the following behaviors: gross or repeated violations of safety rules, repeated intentional disruptions of an activity, being disrespectful to an adult (ignoring, talking back & rude comments), repeated use of vulgar language, intentional physical aggression, and intimidation and cruelty; either physical or mental. A major offense will result in the completion of an **Incident Report** by the observing staff member.

After the child's **major offense**, a meeting will take place between the site coordinator, the group leader and the parent/guardian to write "The Success Plan", how to better support a child and ensure his/her safety and success in our program. Prime Time staff will work with the family to identify strategies in which to best support the child's learning and development.

Prime Time After School Program has the following behavior guidelines:

- Individuals are **responsible** for their actions, their belongings and the supplies/space we use while in our program.
- We **respect** each other and our surroundings.
- **Honestly** is the best policy for relationship and interaction.
- We **care** for ourselves and those around us.

When a participant of our program does not follow the above guidelines, we will take the following steps:

1. Group Leader will redirect the child to more appropriate behavior.
2. If the behaviors reoccur, staff will remind of the behavior guidelines as rules of our program. When necessary, further discussion will take place between the child and staff handling the situation.
3. If the behavior persists, staff will document the situation and parent/guardian will be notified. This written documentation will include what the improper behavior was, what provoked the problem (when possible), and the corrective action taken.
4. If the behavior continues, a meeting will take place between the site coordinator, the group educator and the parent/guardian to discuss how to promote positive behavior in order to avoid suspension/termination. This may include developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program, giving out literature regarding methods of improving behavior, offering referrals for evaluations, diagnostic, or therapeutic services, or reducing the number of days the child is in the program.

5. If there is no change in behavior, a suspension may occur. When a suspension has been issued, contact between the parent/guardian and the Site Coordinator must happen before the child can return to the program.
6. If the student behavior does not improve, the child will be subject to termination from the program.
7. If at any time the child's behavior threatens the immediate safety of the child, other children or any staff, the parent /guardian will be notified and expected to pick up the child **immediately**.

Suspension and Termination

The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in the immediate suspension of the participant for the remainder of the current day and up to 4 days afterwards at the discretion of the Site Coordinator:

- Endangering the wellbeing and safety of other children and/or staff members and volunteers.
- Stealing or damaging Primetime/school or personal property.
- Leaving the program without permission.
- Continuous use of profanity, vulgarity, or obscenities.
- Acting in a lewd manner.

If any of those behaviors persist, staff may suspend the child a second time before termination. Extremely violent /threatening behavior or conduct wherein a child is seriously injured or property is damaged can result in immediate termination. It is the Prime Time's goal to help children find ways to express and manage difficult situations/emotions and be able to function well in group settings with their peers. If the staff feel a child cannot remain in our program, they will work with parents to find a more suitable program for their child(ren)as well as provide referrals to outside agencies that may be able to help through an evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services. Parent/guardian will be given a specific termination date that will allow them an adequate amount of time to seek alternative child care. However, the given termination date will depend on the risk of that child to other children's safety. "

Sources:

School Age Parent Handbook. (2020, June 30). YMCA. Retrieved on October 13, 2020 from https://holyokeymca.org/files/galleries/2020_Child_Care_Parent_Handbook-0001.pdf

If you have concerns or need further explanation about this policy, please feel free to contact Grace Marczuk, Program Administrator, at (413) 259 3177 or at Marczukg@amherstma.gov. You may also contact Becky Demling, Outreach Director, at (413) 259 3151 or at demlingb@amherstma.gov

Other Possible Reasons for Termination

Non-payment of fees: Non-payment of fees will necessitate removal of your child from the program. Parent/guardian and emergency phone numbers will be used to locate parents/guardians for retrieval of their children.

Prior to termination of a child the program will meet with the parent to discuss the concerns and to work with the family to resolve the situation. If there is no resolution, the Administrator will meet with the parent to inform them of a two-week termination notice. The meeting will be followed up by giving the parent a written statement of the two-week termination notice including the reason for termination. When possible, and with parent consent, the program will assist the family in finding alternate childcare services.

Prime Time After School Program staff strives to ensure that your child(ren)'s afternoons are spent in a positive, safe and enriching environment. We hope that your experience with us will be a positive one. Parents' and guardians' comments, suggestions, complaints, concerns and compliments are most welcome. Amherst Recreation Prime Time After School Program has an open-door policy. Please feel free to contact the Site Coordinator, Grace Marczuk, at Marczukk@amherstma.gov or call at 413-259-3177. You may also contact Rey Harp, Recreation Director, at (413) 259 3138 or at harpr@amherstma.gov

We would love feedback, both positive and the negative so we can become a better program. Thank you for allowing us to serve you and your child!

Expectation of Parents

Our goal is to provide a safe, enriching, and appropriate program environment where all children can grow, learn and feel safe. Achieving the goals are the responsibility of the staff, but also of each adult who enters our program. Parents of enrolled children and assisting adults are expected to behave in a proper manner.

Parents are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Use appropriate language when in the program-no swearing/ cursing or derogatory language
- Treat their child(ren), the staff, and other children with respect-no physical/verbal punishments
- Parents are responsible for any child that accompanies them to the program for pick up and are expected to follow all policies and procedure while on the premises
- To ensure safety, children won't be released to parents/guardians that are under the influence of any substance