

PARENT HANDBOOK

ACSA AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM



AGINCOURT COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM 4139 SHEPPARD AVENUE
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Dear Parents, Guardians and Family members

Welcome to Agincourt Community Services Association's (ACSA) After School Program (ASP).

This Parent Handbook has been developed to introduce you to ACSA and its After School Program. It gives you important information about our program, policies and procedures. It also gives you an overview of the services available through ACSA and the important work we do in our community.

Please take the time to read and review the handbook. We request that you sign the parent agreement set out at the end of the handbook, acknowledging that you understand and agree to comply with the guidelines, policies and procedures set out in this handbook. Please note that ACSA reserves the right to change or amend the guidelines, policies and procedures as seen fit.

We look forward to working with you and your child/children.

After School Team
Agincourt Community Services Association

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www.agincourtcommunityservices.com

ABOUT Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA)

In response to the fast-changing community of Agincourt in the 1970's, eight local churches came together to assist local residents who were in need. ACSA opened its doors for the first time in a little white church on the corner of Birchmount and Sheppard. The fledgling agency started by offering supports such as information and referral, emergency food and clothing and by providing a space called "The Family Life Centre", where professionals could provide supportive counselling to people in the Agincourt area.

Rev. Bruce Scott from Knox United Church devoted nearly half of his time in launching Agincourt Community Services Association and said in 1970, "ACSA is an expression of genuine concern for community needs. It involves the wider community working cooperatively for the common good and it is tangible evidence of people helping people".

Today, ACSA addresses a variety of issues including systemic poverty, hunger, housing, homelessness, unemployment, accessibility and social isolation. Over the years ACSA has been funded by all levels of government, several foundations, schools, local faith communities and The United Way of Greater Toronto. In 2017 ACSA was selected as a UWTYR anchor agency demonstrating its leadership and ability to respond to the ever changing needs of Scarborough communities.

ACSA Child and Family Centre is situated at 4139 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, ON M1S 1T4 and provides the following programs:

- Parent and Early Childhood Programs
- Parenting/Parent-Child Workshops
- Teen Moms' Drop In
- After School Programs
- Information and Referral

ACSA AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

ACSA After School program is free of charge and is designed to promote healthy living through recreational activities, healthy eating, promoting valuable life skills and knowledge of Health and Wellness, for children 6-12 years of age. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is one of the program's main funders.

The ACSA After School Program provides a safe, supportive place for children to experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships, develop confidence and life skills for their important formative middle childhood years.

The ACSA After School Program runs Monday to Friday from after school until 5.30 p.m. **excluding** Statutory Holidays, P.A. Days, March Break, Christmas Break, School Closures and Days allocated for ACSA Staff Development (prior notice will always be given).

The following schools are serviced by ACSA After School Program:

Chester Le Jr. P.S.	Edgewood Jr.P.S
Fairglen Jr. P.S.	General Crerar P.S.
Highland Heights Jr. P.S.	Lynnwood Heights Jr. P.S.
Pauline Johnson Jr. P.S.	Silver Springs P.S.
St. Lawrence C.S.	Tam O'Shanter Jr. P.S.
Timberbank Jr. P.S.	Dorset Park Jr P.S

The ACSA After School Program Offers participants the following:

- Physical Activity – The program plans take into consideration the ages, abilities and needs of the children and ensures that all participants will be engaged. Through physical literacy, and a variety of structured and unstructured play, the program enhances the participant's levels of self confidence and self esteem.
- Healthy Eating – Through the healthy snacks provided daily, the children learn about nutrition, healthy eating habits, food label reading, mock grocery shopping for healthy meal plans and knowledge about the Canada Food Guide.
- Health and Wellness – Through planned activities, the program enables participants to learn valuable life skills, including, leadership, team work, cooperation, respect, communication, resiliency, inclusion (anti-bullying) and social responsibility.
- Home work support (Limited), cultural awareness and arts and crafts are included as well.

Parent Participation

We value and encourage parental involvement and recognize that parents are the most enduring caregivers and the primary educators of their children. The after school program staff will communicate with parents/caregivers any concerns on an as needed to basis. The After School

Program staff are available to talk at dismissal but it is requested that the parents wait until all the other participants are signed off, to avoid delaying other parents and to maintain confidentiality. It is encouraged that parents share information about the child's development, illness if any or any other concerns as they arise. We also encourage feedback from parents/guardians throughout the year to help improve our program.

Staff

The After School Program staff are qualified and trained to work with children and have received High Five Healthy Child Development Training (offered by the Parks & Recreation Ontario and is supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation) and hold valid First Aid and CPR Certification. Staff is also required to submit a Vulnerable Sector Screening prior to employment. The afterschool program always maintains a 1:15 ratio (1 staff to every 15 students).

The high five principles guiding the after school program are as follows:

- 1) Provide a Caring Adult
- 2) Provide the opportunity for students to make friends
- 3) Provide the opportunity for students to play
- 4) Provide the opportunity for students to master skills
- 5) Provide the opportunity for students to participate

Volunteers/Placement Students

ACSA is a not for profit organization and thus recruits volunteers and placement students from a variety of high schools and post-secondary institutions, who are interested in becoming teachers, youth workers or social workers. Students/Volunteers are also required to submit a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

Our volunteers and placement students work closely with the After School Program leaders to provide a robust program to our participants, and we utilize the talents, time and enthusiasm of those who want to volunteer and give back to community to enhance our programs.

General Policies and Procedures

Attendance

The community based after school programs are typically in high demand and have limited spaces in the school therefore parents/caregivers must be aware that attendance is **mandatory** for the ACSA After School Program. This is mandated by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport and it ensures that those children registered in the program are receiving the maximum benefits of participation.

Participants who are absent for more than two days without a note from a physician, will be removed from the program and be put on a waitlist. If a participant does not have regular attendance, or if the participant is regularly picked up before 5.30 p.m., the participant will be removed from the program, unless a medical note is issued. If a participant has to take time off from the program, parent/guardian must discuss this with the program leader and a decision will be made by the program coordinator, based on the circumstances of the

situation. Although programs that are run by the school during the after school hours will be accommodated to the best of our ability.

Reporting an Absence

All absences from ACSA After School Program should be informed to the Child and Family Coordinator at **416-873-6484**, prior to 3:30. Absences may also be reported to the After School Leaders, should parents/caregivers have prior knowledge of it.

It is very important to note that the After School staff check with the school's office staff to ensure that the participant was in attendance on any given day and if a participant is absent from school, then he/she is marked absent from the after school program as well.

Important: If a participant is not in program but was present at school and the After School program staff have no prior notice of an absence, the program leaders will call the parents/guardians at the numbers which have been provided in the participants intake file. If staff are not successful in reaching a parent/caregiver within ONE hour of program start and should the participant's whereabouts not be known, **police will be contacted to ensure the safety of the participant.**

All program leaders will use the school phones to contact you. But in the event, they use a cellular telephone, it will show as "unknown caller". Therefore, between the hours of 3 p.m. and 5.45 p.m. Monday to Friday, if there is an "unknown caller", it could be one of the ACSA After School Program leaders trying to contact you. We request that parents/guardians be aware of this and also inform the emergency contacts about this procedure.

Change of Contact Information

Parents/Guardians are responsible for updating any change of information to the ACSA After School Program staff. This is very important as staff will need to contact you or your emergency contacts should there be an emergency. An information update form will be circulated in January of each year, and it is expected that it be completed and returned to the program staff in a timely manner. It is also highly recommended that emergency contacts be someone other than the parents/guardians that typically pick up/are responsible for the program participant.

Custody Agreement

If a custody agreement is in place for the participant/s, a copy of the custody or court order must be on file with Agincourt Community Services Association. Staff will act in accordance with the legal document. If any issues arise, the staff will follow the information provided by the enrolling parent, unless there is a case of dual enrollment from both parents.

Pick up Procedure

The safety and well-being of all participants is of the utmost importance at the ACSA After School Program. All participants must be picked up at 5.30 p.m. which is the close of program.

The following procedures will be adhered to:

- In the application form, the section Program Pick-up and Sign-out has the information the program leaders will follow and adhere to, unless informed otherwise.

- Only parents/guardians or authorized individuals identified in the form will be permitted to pick up participants at dismissal. Proof of identification may be requested by the staff.
- Should there be any unavoidable circumstances where someone else needs to pick up the participant, it should be shared with staff prior to that day, in writing. The individual picking up the participant will be asked to show identification. This is for the safety of all participants and we ask that you understand and cooperate with the procedure.
- Participants in grades 5 & 6 will be able to sign out by themselves provided the parents/guardians choose that option and sign for it. They will be allowed to leave the program only at 5.30 p.m., not earlier. Please do not ask that your child be dismissed earlier.
- Parents/guardians are requested to wait outside the gym/classroom, until the leaders come out and sign each participant out in an orderly manner. This is very important, it keeps our participants safe and does not disrupt program.
- Should there be any reason that the participant needs to be picked up early, it is requested that parents/guardians knock of the designated door, and wait until leaders come out to sign out participants.
- The program encourages and teaches participants to be independent in getting ready to go home in an orderly and timely manner. Please also encourage your child to do so, this is beneficial for all participants.
- Please be mindful of going into the school after picking up your child, as the custodians will be cleaning and we do not want to create extra work by re-entering cleaned premises. Classrooms after school hours are either locked/not accessible. Please refrain from going into classrooms as the After School Program will not be held responsible for any loss or damage.
- If a participant is not picked up five minutes after program end, (5.35p.m.), and there have been no prior notification of any delays, the staff will try to contact the parent/guardian/individuals authorized to pick up. Failing which, the emergency contact will be called within 10 minutes. They will try again at 15 minutes.
- If after 30 minutes, staff is unable to contact either parent/guardian or any of the designated emergency contacts, **please note staff are obligated to call Children's Aid Society (CAS).**

Late Fees

The enrolling parent/guardian will be responsible for any late fee incurred. If the participant is not picked up by 5.30, staff are permitted to charge \$1.00 for the first five (5) minutes, (i.e. up to 5.35p.m.), then an additional \$1.00 per minute until he/she is picked up. Late fee is due at pick up. Please note that any pending late fee balance will affect participant's space in the program as we have limited numbers.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

All staff are certified with Standard First Aid and CPR and trained in emergency procedures at all school sites. Parents will be required to sign a consent form for emergency medical attention and transportation. Fire Drills and Lock Downs are practiced regularly. In case of building evacuation participants will be escorted to the nearest exit and all will be accounted for by taking attendance. Parents will be informed where to pick up participants should this occur at any school site.

Inclement Weather

If the school board (TDSB or TCDSB) makes the decision to close the school due to inclement weather, ACSA After School Program will automatically also be cancelled. Please check local school websites during these times for updates.

Snacks

ACSA After School program provides a nutritious, healthy snack free of charge for all participants. Please note that all TDSB and TCDSB schools are “nut free” zones. All participants are asked to eat the snack provided by the program, leaders will encourage participants to try at least part of the snack and if participants are still hungry, and if time permits, participants may opt to have any of the healthy snack in their lunch bag. **Sharing of snacks is strongly discouraged/prohibited due to the high incident of severe food allergies prevalent among participants which can result in serious repercussions. Please remind your child not to share personal food items with other participants.**

The program does not encourage or allow any candies, chocolates, chewing gum, chips, etc. or sweetened beverages. They may be served as “treats”, at the program leaders’ discretion from time to time.

Please note: The After School program has “Pizza Days” at least once a year for the participants. During summer months freezies are also served and air blown popcorn is served on movie days. Should you have any questions/concerns about the above-mentioned foods, please speak to program leaders.

Appropriate Clothing

ACSA after school program promotes and encourages active physical play; physical activity is scheduled/ included in the daily program plans. To ensure safe play, all participants should have appropriate clothing in the gym and outdoors. Indoor running shoes, outdoor shoes, comfortable, non-restrictive clothing, and during the winter months, please ensure participants have appropriate winter jackets, scarves, hats, gloves, boots etc. All are essential for full participation in the after school programs. Due to ensuring the safety of all participants, should a participant not have proper gym shoes, they will not be able to participate in activities in the gym and will be required to sit out.

Medication

It is required that any medication needed for the participant be administered before or after program by the parents/guardians. Participants who need medication due to allergies are required to carry their EPI pen at all times, in the original container with the original pharmacist’s label indicating name of the participant and with the expiry date shown. Staff will not be responsible for the EPI pen or administration.

If the student does not have their medication with them during program (EPI Pen, Puffer, Etc.) they will not be permitted to attend program and must be picked up by parents. Parents will be notified in these situations.

The program requires that all physical, mental health conditions that may require accommodation, along with allergies and dietary restrictions be clearly indicated in the registration form and a separate conversation with the Program Coordinator/After School Program Staff is strongly recommended. The safety and well being of all participants is of utmost importance.

Personal Belongings

ACSA After School Program does not allow any personal toys or electronics in the program. The staff are not responsible for loss or damage of personal items. All participants are asked to keep personal belongings in their backpacks and not be removed during after school program time.

Behaviour Management

All participants are treated in a positive and respectful manner that supports healthy child development.

In September of each year, at the beginning of the ACSA After School Program, all participants, along with the leaders, will compile a list of program expectations and safety rules to ensure a safe, fun and comfortable environment for all. All participants are expected to follow and adhere to the mutually agreed upon rules.

All expectations and rules will be logical and comprehensive and will be administered in a consistent manner. Staff will follow positive discipline techniques and guidance at all times and will do their best to deter or eliminate any potential behaviour issues. Positive reinforcement and encouragement will be used as well as redirection to other tasks. Participants will be coached in how to express feelings in an acceptable and appropriate manner. Should there be any incidents, participants will be provided with the opportunity to discuss with staff and think about how they could have dealt with their difficulties in a different more suitable manner. When incidents do occur, both parties will be given opportunities to problem solve and come up with appropriate solutions with staff help.

If needed, “think sheets” will be provided to participants. This tool enables participants to pin point what, why and how the particular incident happened and offers opportunity for the participant to reflect and think about the incident. Parents will be informed and are encouraged to become involved based on the severity of the incident.

The process normally followed will be:

- Discussion about the incident with both parties or the individual; problem solving; tactics developed to avoid future incidents will be discussed.
- Verbal warning is given and parents are informed.
- Think sheets, which will be sent home for parental signatures
- Suspension from program may occur.
- As a last resort, parents will be asked to remove participant from the program.

Agincourt Community Services Association reserves the right to dismiss a participant who has displayed unacceptable behaviour and has not complied with the program or schools behavioural code of conduct, and is a danger to him/herself or other participants. ACSA will work with TDSB/TCDSB staff and follow behaviour guidelines while making a decision.

The After School staff will maintain a daily reflective log and all incidents are recorded. These notes help when staff are dealing with reoccurring incidents and they work towards finding solutions to particular issues. Incidents will be discussed with parents at pick up time. Staff will kindly request your time and ask that you to wait until other participants are signed out. This is so that staff can discuss it privately and in a confidential and professional manner. Your cooperation is much appreciated in these circumstances.

A code of conduct for all participants includes but not restricted to the following:

- Respect for one's self
- Respect for others including other participants and staff
- Use appropriate language, taking responsibility for one's actions
- Keeping hands and feet to self
- Respect differences in others
- Respect for the environment and properties
- Always asking permission for washroom and water breaks and stay within safe zones at all times
- Find appropriate ways to show emotions and feelings
- Resolve problems with mutual respect
- Work together as a team and play safe and fair

Any unauthorized use of TDSB/TCDSB equipment (including fire alarms) by any student will be under the parent's responsibility.

Parents, community expectations

We actively encourage great partnership with parents/caregivers and the community. If a parent or care giver has concerns, we will always actively listen and seek to address concerns as quickly and positively as possible. We will always act to ensure that our program remains a safe place for students, staff and all other members of our community and therefore abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined by ACSA's policy and in accordance with TCDSB/TDSB.

Behaviours that are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated when interacting with staff and/or members of the community include but not limited to:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- emails which are sarcastic, combative, or aggressive in tone and language
- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation
- inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the school, after school leaders/program management team or students on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- any form of physical violence, such as pushing or hitting
- physically intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to individual
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person

Thank you for choosing the ACSA After School program, we look forward to working with you.