

QGPCA After School Program PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK 2021-2022



QGPCA After School Program Parent/Guardian Handbook and Policies

Welcome Parents and Guardians:

This Parent handbook is your guide to important details about our program along with helpful tips to make your child's experience the best possible. Please take the time to review the handbook and keep it handy throughout the year as a resource. You can also find a pdf copy on our website at:

<https://qualicum.org/programs/after-school-program/>

We believe that our Qualicum Graham Park Community Association (QGPCA) After School Program (ASP) will provide your child with the opportunity for healthy growth and development and is a great way to make friends. We have designed our program to be age appropriate, safe and fun. We see parents as partners and welcome your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact us anytime should you have any questions.

Please note that this handbook does not cover in detail all of our policies, procedures or practices. If you are unsure of anything or would like further information on things like specific activities, facilities, safety or behavior management strategies, please contact us. We will be more than happy to answer all questions!

Sincerely,

Sarah Sumner, Program Director
asp@qualicum.org, 613-721-1409 (home)

QGPCA After School Program Cell Phone: 613-501-6976

Please text us at the After School Program cell phone if:

- 1. Your child will not be attending the program that day**
- 2. Someone who is not on the authorized to pick up list will be picking up your child.**

This phone stays at the community center and is checked regularly between 2:15 pm - 5:30 pm.

For concerns or comments relating to registration, overall program structure and safety or staff issues, please contact the Program Director at asp@qualicum.org.

For program updates, copies of monthly newsletters and additional information, please visit <https://qualicum.org/programs/after-school-program/>

Our Program and Our Staff:

The QPGCA After School Program operates under the umbrella of the Qualicum Graham Park Community Association and the City of Ottawa. Our Program Director is responsible for creating innovative programming ideas for the participants in and supervising the program as a whole. The Program Director reports to the President of the Qualicum Graham Park Community Association, who can be reached at president@qualicum.org.

We select our supervisors, and youth staff with care, paying careful attention to their ability to serve as positive role models for your child. All adult supervisors have valid Vulnerable Sector Screening checks and there is always a certified First Aider on-site. All youth staff receive training in leading activities, emergency response, and QPGCA After School Program Policies and Procedures. Should you have any concerns, please contact us at asp@qualicum.org.

Our Program Director, supervisors and staff work hard to ensure you and your child(ren) have the best experience possible at QPGCA After School Program. **We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive comments or behavior directed at staff. Such behaviours could result in the cancellation of your contract with us. Should you have any concerns, please contact Sarah Sumner, Program Director in the evenings at home at 613-721-1409 and not in front of children or youth staff.**

Fees:

The QPGCA After School Program fees are \$225 per month per child regardless of how many days they attend. Cheques should be made payable to “QGP After Four Program”. We are unable to offer discounts for multiple children in one family.

School Bus Registration:

Parents are responsible for organizing bus transportation to the QPGCA After School Program with the school their child(ren) attend(s). The buses stop at 48 Nanaimo Drive. We recommend you organize this well in advance since there is an application process.

Monthly Newsletters:

We post our monthly newsletters on the QGPCA website <https://qualicum.org/programs/after-school-program/> and email them to all families. These newsletters will contain essential information on the weekly activities, special events and changes to the program.

Arrival and Departure Safety:

One of our staff will meet the children as they disembark from their school bus to greet them and sign them in. In the event we have no record of a child being absent or late and they do not get off their scheduled bus, staff will then contact a parent/guardian. Staff will leave messages at each number until all contacts on file are attempted. If we cannot reach a parent/guardian, staff will contact the school to determine if the child was present during the day and might have missed the bus. If the parent/guardian or school is unable to explain the absence, a supervisor will initiate the procedure for a missing child.

Children must be signed out by the adult who is picking them up. The daily sign-out sheet is outside the front door on a clipboard. **It is not acceptable for a child to sign themselves out** unless the child has parental approval to walk home by themselves.

We will only release children to parents/legal guardians. We will not release children into the care of any one else without expressed consent from the parents/legal guardians and verified identification. Please complete the Emergency Contact and Alternative Pick Up consent sections in the registration form appropriately. In the event that you wish your child to be picked up by someone other than you, please communicate with staff by leaving a text at the QGPCA ASP cell phone. If the individual is not already on the authorized pickup list, please indicate the name, address and contact number of the authorized adult, and the date and time of pick up. Authorized adults must produce photo identification bearing the same address that parents have provided.

Children in grade 4 and older may sign themselves out of our program with your written parental permission. In the event that a situation falls outside of regular staff procedures, program staff will act in the best interest of the child.

Buddy System:

Participants are required to use the buddy system at all times when leaving a program area. This includes going to the washroom, or the water fountain.

First Aid, CPR and Accident and Injury Responses:

There will always be a minimum of one certified First Aider with CPR on site. In addition, we have a fully stocked first aid kit on site dedicated to the QPGCA After School Program. In the event of an accident or medical emergency, primary first aid will be administered to the injured child by a supervisor. If the injury or illness is significant enough to warrant prompt medical attention, parents will be notified immediately and be asked to pick up their child promptly. If Emergency Medical Services are required, 9-1-1 will be called and parents will be contacted as soon as possible. A supervisor will complete an incident report and submit a copy to the City of Ottawa.

Emergency Evacuation:

In the event of an emergency where the Community Centre must be evacuated, the designated meeting spot is the basketball court in Nanaimo Park. If necessary and feasible, staff will escort children to a nearby safe location. Once the children have reached safety, a supervisor will contact parents to provide detailed instructions on where to pick up children. To facilitate contacting multiple families quickly, the first contact with parents will be using the email distribution list, if possible. As always, the best way to contact us is via the QPGCA After School Program cell phone. During an emergency, if possible please use text messaging, to keep the line free for urgent calls and to allow multiple families to contact simultaneously. During an emergency, voice mail messages will not be regularly checked, until the situation has stabilized.

Indoor Shoes:

Children must have a pair of properly fitting indoor shoes to wear while they are at the QPGCA After School Program so they have footwear to protect their feet from indoor hazards and in the case of emergency evacuations. Shoes should give adequate protection outdoors in snow or rain. These shoes must be labelled with the child's name and be stored at the community centre. Flip flops, sandals, Crocs or slippers are not appropriate.

Dressing for the Weather:

Every day, in every season, we aim to spend a minimum of 40 minutes outside unless there are extreme weather conditions. This is longer than most children get to play outside at recess, and will be in more varied weather conditions than they may be expected to go outside at school. Playing outside allows children to get valuable physical activity after a school day that is mostly spent being sedentary indoors.

Very heavy rain, thunderstorms, hail or extreme temperatures will keep us indoors, but not the vast majority of weather conditions seen in Ottawa throughout the year. However, it is imperative that children have clothing appropriate for the weather.

Early fall/late spring: Sun hats are recommended.

Late Fall/Early Spring: As appropriate for the day's conditions: coat or raincoat, waterproof splash pants and waterproof rain boots. Light mittens/gloves and hat/toque. Extra dry socks and dry mittens. Umbrellas are not permitted.

Winter: Warm coat, snow pants (mandatory), hat/toque, mittens (waterproof is best, gloves not recommended), neck gaiter/scarf. Extra dry socks and mittens.

Labelling of Personal Items:

Please ensure that all personal belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name. Staff members will make efforts to reunite those items clearly labeled with their owners. Unfortunately, we are unable to retain items beyond 30 days and all unclaimed items are donated to charity.

No Electronics Policy:

Electronic devices of any kind, including but not limited to phones, tablets and game consoles are not permitted to be used while at the program and must be kept in a child's bag at all times. If a staff member sees a child using a device, it will immediately be confiscated. The device will be returned to the parent at pick up time.

Parking:

There is limited parking beside the QGP Community Centre and on Nanaimo Drive. Please keep the road in front of the Community Centre clear at all times for access by emergency vehicles.

Pick Up Times and Late Pickup Penalties:

Children must be picked up by **5:20 pm**, with a 10 minute grace period, after which children and parents must be out of the building and signed out. **After 5:30 pm, there is a late fee of \$20 for the first five minutes, and \$1 for each subsequent minute.** These penalties are strictly enforced. After the second late pickup, staff will request an updated alternative emergency pick up plan to be provided. After the third late pick up, children may be asked to leave the program, with the final decision being made by the QGPCA board of directors.

At registration, all families are required to list on the registration form at least one alternative pickup plan for unforeseen circumstances, such as usual traffic or imperative last minute job requirements. Once the parent/usual caregiver realizes they will be late, it is their responsibility to contact the individual(s) with permission to pick up listed on the registration form, and to text the QGPCA ASP cell phone to inform us of the change in plans.

Absences:

If your child will be absent, it is important that you [text us at the QGPCA ASP cell phone](#) as soon as you know they will be away. We cannot accept messages from siblings or friends as official notification.

Snacks and Water bottles:

Snacks will **not** be provided by the program. Parents are strongly encouraged to pack additional nut-free snacks in their child's lunch as there will be snack time when we come in from outdoor play. Litterless snacks are strongly encouraged. To reduce movement during the time when masks are off, all garbage/packaging/uneaten food must be packed back into the lunch bag and taken home. The sharing of snacks, except between siblings, is strictly prohibited.

Children must have their own refillable water bottle. Drinking directly from the fountain is not permitted while COVID restrictions are in place.

We may occasionally offer special treats or snacks to the children in our program. Please ensure that we are aware of any special dietary needs and food allergies.

Please note, we do not serve nuts or other common allergens at the QPGCA After School Program however, we are unable to guarantee a peanut free environment due to our facility being a community facility.

Waitlist Policy:

We maintain a waitlist on a first come first served basis with priority given to QGP families, and families with other children currently registered in the program. We update our waitlist annually by confirming with parents that they wish to remain on the list and by updating contact information.

Professional Development (PD) Days:

PD days are offered at the QPGCA After School Program provided there is sufficient participation to make a program viable. The enrollment of 15 children in the PD program is the minimum participant enrollment to carry out a PD day program at the community centre.

Snow Days:

If school buses are cancelled in Ottawa by OSTA (<http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/>) and the CSTO (<http://www.transportscolaire.ca/>), the After School Program will not operate. If school buses are running for only one of the two bus consortiums, the After School Program will run between 2:30 - 5:20 pm for the children who arrive by bus only.

Toilet Training

Children who are not toilet trained or who have frequent accidents cannot remain in the program.

Behaviour Management:

Our staff are dedicated to providing your child with a creative innovative program that will capture his or her interest and keep them engaged. We will always encourage children to have fun, play fairly, and to show respect for themselves and others.

Our overriding philosophy for behavior management encompasses these guiding principles:

1. The use of positive child behavior management practices.
2. Engaging with children with an open-minded perspective to determine root causes of the negative behaviours.
3. Seeking and engaging parent involvement.

Children must:

- Keep their hands and feet to themselves

- Refrain from bullying or excluding
- Speak nicely to each other
- Touch only what belongs to them
- Stay within the activity area
- Listen to supervisors and teen staff
- Ask a staff member for help if needed
- Report all inappropriate behavior to a supervisor as soon as possible.

Please review the *QPGCA After School Program Code of Behaviour* with your child before the start of the program.

We will inform parents about unacceptable behavior and we encourage you to have a follow-up discussion with your child. We will evaluate the intent, number of occurrences and severity of the incidents. After three incidents, a participant will be suspended for a minimum of one day and until a specific plan to manage the situation is in place. The child and parents must be willing to participate in the creation of the plan. After four incidents, children may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Matters of Custody:

Unless a written separation agreement or court order to the contrary is provided by either parent, both parents are equally entitled to custody of their child. In cases where custody is granted to one parent only, and the QPGCA After School Program has been provided with a copy of the court order, management will take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorized access to a participant by his/her parent, including contacting the police for assistance and intervention. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the Program Director with respect to any changes to custody or access rights and to provide the Program Director with a copy of the most recent applicable separation agreement or court order at the earliest opportunity.

Medication Administration Procedures:

When a request for the administration of medication is received from the parent or guardian of a participant, the QPGCA After School Program will obtain written permission and instructions from the parent, including the type of medication to be administered, the required dosage, and the action to be taken in the event of possible hazards or side-effects. In the event of any change in medication, new instructions must be completed prior to administration. A staff member administering oral medication or an EpiPen is acting according to policy and is covered by QPGCA's liability insurance. All prescribed medications should be transported to and from the QPGCA After School Program in the original container, clearly labelled with the participant's name, the medication, and dosage. Prescribed medication will be administered with sensitivity and in privacy by the Program Director or an adult supervisor if the Program Director is away. A record of the administration of prescribed medication will be kept.

EpiPen:

Children with an anaphylactic allergy must carry on their person or keep in their school bag an EpiPen. The QGPCA ASP must also be provided with a second EpiPen to be stored securely on-site as a back-up. The QGPCA After School Program will implement strategies that reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic sources in programming spaces and the community centre. Individual information regarding children's allergies will be displayed in common staff areas. In a case where the child is displaying anaphylactic symptoms, a staff member will administer, or help the child administer his or her EpiPen and 9-1-1 will be called. The parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.

Program Evaluation:

We love hearing constructive feedback from parents. If you have questions, concerns or comments we would be happy to hear from you. The best way to do this is to email us at asp@qualicum.org with your comments or to arrange a time for a phone meeting. It is difficult for us to have conversations with you at the end of the day as we need to keep our eyes on the children who are still in our care.

Withdrawal Notice Required:

If you decide to withdraw your child from the program at any time during the year, we require two months paid notice to fill their spot.

THE QGPCA AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM OPERATES UNDER A LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The QGPCA After School Program is an Authorized Recreational and Skill Building Program, as laid out in the Child Care and Early Years Act because:

- Care is provided only for children who are four years old or older, or if the child care is provided on or after September 1 in a calendar year, will attain the age of four in that year.
- It operates once a day for no more than 3 hours (e.g. after school) on weekdays.
- Complementary to providing care, the program promotes recreational, artistic, musical or athletic skills or provides religious, cultural or linguistic instruction.
- It is not operated in a person's home.
- It is authorized by the service system manager (in this case, the City of Ottawa) to offer child care in their service area because the program can demonstrate to the service system manager that it offers programming that supports the health, safety, and wellbeing of children.