

AFTER THE BELL

Norwalk Public Schools
Before and Afterschool Program

2009 - 2010

Parent Handbook

With funding assistance provided by
Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Foundation
Fairfield County Community Foundation
For Our Children's Unlimited Success, Inc.
GE Capital
Norwalk Children's Foundation
Perrin Family Foundation
United Way of Coastal Fairfield County

Welcome

The before and after school program at Kendall and Rowayton Elementary Schools is administered by **Norwalk Public Schools** and called **After The Bell**. We extend a warm welcome to each family enrolling in After the Bell and look forward to having your child with us as we start the new school year.

After the Bell was developed because we believe that an excellent before and after school program, managed by committed and skilled professionals in a safe, nurturing learning environment, is a key component of realizing every child's potential.

In partnership with **Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County** at Kendall School, and **The Norwalk Education Foundation** at Rowayton School, the Norwalk Public Schools will provide a high quality before and after school program that supports and challenges our elementary school students academically, physically, and socially.

The program Goals and Objectives are:

Goal 1 Support academic achievement

- Provide activities to support each school's improvement plan
- Design after school programming using information on student needs and progress
- Employ a site coordinator to serve as a bridge between school day and before/after school and hire teachers to provide academic supports

Goal 2 Provide a wide variety of high quality activities and enrichment programs

- Involve community partners to increase children's experiential development
- Increase students' interests, creativity and capabilities contributing to higher self-esteem
- Increase parent and student engagement with school

Goal 3 Provide a safe, nurturing environment with high quality staff

- Hire qualified staff who engage children & contribute to a positive school climate
- Provide professional development for staff
- Foster positive communication with families
- Increase parent and student engagement with school

You can look forward to Power Hour at both schools, where certified teachers offer academic enrichment programs designed to engage students in learning. While this program will not be tutoring, it will reinforce classroom lessons in an atmosphere of fun. We will be letting you know what is available for your child as opportunities are presented.

Code of Conduct

Please share the following information with your child.

In order to ensure a comfortable and safe environment for all the children in the program, we require the following standards of good conduct for continuing participation in After the Bell.

Each child will be expected to:

- Show respect for others and their property,
- Behave responsibly and in a manner that ensures the safety and well being of self and others; and
- Follow the directions of the childcare staff.

If problems arise, we will follow these steps:

- Staff will speak with the child and reaffirm our expectations and the parent(s) will be notified,
- If the problem persists, the child meets with staff to develop a plan to promote a positive change in behavior.
- If the problem continues, parent will be notified and staff will work with parent and child to develop strategies to modify behavior.

If your child repeatedly demonstrates behavior that endangers other children – deliberate pushing, fighting, hitting, kicking, etc. – then your child will be suspended from the program for a specified period of time.

Parents and childcare staff are partners in helping children to develop good habits. We need your support when children are behaving in a way that physically or emotionally endangers others. Please let your children know that you want them to obey childcare workers while they are in the program in the same way they are expected to obey you when they are at home. If you are having discipline problems at home, please let the Program Manager know. We can help establish common strategies to provide your child with consistent rules and responses to misbehavior at home and in the program and connect you to parenting classes if you wish.

We seek to provide a level of discipline that maintains order while encouraging children to make their own decisions about the activities in which they want to participate. **IF** your child demonstrates behavior that would indicate a need for a more structured environment, we reserve the right to ask you to remove your child to a more appropriate childcare solution.

If your child is having a problem with another child in the program, please speak to the staff and ask them to intervene. It is NOT appropriate for you to try to discipline another parent's child.

Our program, as well as Kendall and Rowayton Schools, tries to reinforce the values of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, kindness, caring, and citizenship in all of its activities.

Enrollment Procedures

Participants must be students enrolled in Kendall or Rowayton Elementary Schools during the 2009-2010 academic year. You may register your child for full time morning, afternoon or both the before and afterschool program. You may enroll your child for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 days a week, but we ask that if you attend less than 5 days a week that you be specific which days of the week you will use the program. A Registration Form must be completed before any child can take part in the program because we must have information it provides in case of an emergency.

It is very important that you notify us if there is any change in home or workplace information. Please do not jeopardize our ability to reach you if there is an emergency by forgetting to give us new phone numbers or addresses.

If you are registering by mail, a check or money order covering the first month's fee and a \$25.00 non-refundable yearly registration fee *per family* must accompany the registration form. At the open registration evenings, you may pay cash, check, or money order - the dates and locations are below. **NO PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE AT THE SCHOOLS.** All payments must be made to Norwalk Public Schools central office at City Hall.

- Your check should clearly identify your child's first and last name in the memo line.
- Your check should include a \$25 non-refundable registration fee per family. If you are registering more than 1 child, you just pay a single \$25 registration fee.
- We will be happy to verify payments to employers for dependent care spending accounts or other child care assistance or to the IRS for child care tax credits.
- We also accept payments from the Connecticut Care 4 Kids program if you qualify. If you are a previous Care for Kids enrollee, it is your responsibility to make sure your paperwork is up-to-date at the time of registration. Otherwise, full tuition rates may apply.
- **Checks should be made payable to: Norwalk Public School After the Bell Program**
- Checks can be mailed to:
 - After The Bell Program
 - Norwalk Public Schools
 - 125 East Avenue, 3rd Floor
 - Norwalk, CT 06852

Open Registration, City Hall, 3rd Floor, Conference Room 322

- Monday, August 24, 2009, 4:00-8:00pm
- Monday, August 31, 2009, 4:00-8:00pm

Financial Assistance: Our ability to provide financial assistance is reflected in our fee schedule. Discounts are available for families whose children qualify for free or reduced lunch. If your family qualifies for free or reduced price lunch, please let us know on your registration form.

Withdrawal Policy: If you elect to withdraw your child from the program, payments previously made **are not refundable.**

Changing Arrangements: If changes in your work schedule mean you need to make different arrangements with us, please ask the staff for a **Change of Enrollment Form** so

that everyone is clear what is happening and you are charged the appropriate amount for care. It is your responsibility to inform us of a change of enrollment.

AFTER THE BELL MONTHLY FEE SCHEDULE 2009 – 2010*

		Full Rate per Child	Eligible for Reduced Lunch	Eligible for Free Lunch
5 days/week	AM	\$ 175.00	\$ 131.25	\$ 87.50
	PM	\$ 225.00	\$ 168.75	\$ 112.50
	AM & PM	\$ 335.00	\$ 251.25	\$ 167.50
4 days/week	AM	\$ 140.00	\$ 105.00	\$ 70.00
	PM	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 100.00
	AM & PM	\$ 300.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 150.00
3 days/week	AM	\$ 100.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00
	PM	\$ 150.00	\$ 112.50	\$ 75.00
	AM & PM	\$ 225.00	\$ 168.75	\$ 112.50
2 days/week	AM	\$ 70.00	\$ 52.50	\$ 35.00
	PM	\$ 100.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00
	AM & PM	\$ 150.00	\$ 112.50	\$ 75.00
1 day/week	AM	\$ 35.00	\$ 26.25	\$ 17.50
	PM	\$ 50.00	\$ 37.50	\$ 25.00
	AM & PM	\$ 75.00	\$ 56.25	\$ 37.50

*Fees subject to change.

We are happy to accept Care 4 Kids payments.

Monthly Tuition: Tuition is calculated on a full 181-day school year, divided by 10 school months (Sep-Jun). This is the reason that tuition remains the same from month to month, even though some months have more school vacation days. If there are snow days, they will be made up and we will provide service for 181 days.

We have a reduced fee for those who qualify for reduced price lunch and a further reduced fee for those on free lunch. Your child does not have to eat the school lunch to qualify for these reduced fees, but you must fill out the free and reduced lunch form to qualify. We will accept Care 4 Kids Payments. Let us know if you need help with this or if you need documentation for an employer's Dependent Care Spending Account Plan or Childcare Tax Credits.

The monthly payments are due by the 25th of the month for the next month. Payments will be due from August through May. We will provide you with a monthly invoice to help you remember. All payments must be made at the Norwalk Public Schools central office at City Hall. NO PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE SCHOOLS.

If we have not received your payment by the first of the month, your child may be discontinued from the program.

Operations

Hours of Care:

We will provide morning care from 7:00 am to start of school, at which time young students will be escorted to their classrooms for the first few weeks. We resume service when children are dismissed from class at the end of the day and are open until 6:00 pm.

Delayed Openings

When schools have a delayed opening, before school programs operated in Norwalk Public Schools will also have a delayed start for the same amount of time as the schools. For example, if an elementary school open 2 hours late due to snow (opening at 11 am instead of 9 am), the afterschool program will also start late (opening at 9 am instead of 7 am).

Early Dismissal

When there is early dismissal due to bad weather or any other unsafe conditions, afterschool programs are cancelled.

When there is a scheduled early dismissal as shown on the school calendar (e.g. professional development, parent conferences, etc.), afterschool programs will begin as soon as school is dismissed and will be open until the regularly scheduled closing time of 6 pm.

Late Fees:

A late fee will be charged to any parent arriving after 6:00 pm. The fee will be \$10.00 per child for each extra fifteen minutes. Please call us if you know you will be late. **Calling does not excuse you from the late fee.** Parents who are consistently late will be asked to find other care to better meet their schedule. When you are late, it not only means that two staff members have to stay when they may have other plans, it is also very hard on your child who has already had a long day.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures:

It is essential that we know who is under our care at any given time. **Therefore, we REQUIRE the child's parent or guardian or other adult designated by you to sign the child into the program in the morning and sign them out in the afternoon.** We will not release a child to someone under the age of 12 (state law) and you are not allowed to drop your child off without signing in. If a high school student will be frequently or consistently responsible for picking up a child, we must have a note to that effect and they should be listed on your enrollment form.

Illness:

The After the Program staff has the right to deny admittance of any child to the program at any time for reasons of obvious illness. We may insist upon early departure should symptoms of illness emerge during the course of the program. Upon notification that your child is ill, we expect you to either pick up your child yourself or arrange for someone else to pick him/her up

within 30 minutes. If a child has not attended school on a given day because of illness, the child may not attend the After the Bell Program.

Snack:

Healthy snacks will be provided by Whitson's, the same company that provides school lunch. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies so we can provide another choice.

Homework time:

A portion of each afternoon is devoted to doing homework. During this time children must do homework, read or work quietly on worksheets we will provide. Kindergarten students are often read to during this period. Please make sure your child understands that he/she must cooperate with staff and not bother other children.

Parent Involvement

We welcome and encourage parental involvement. You are free to visit the program at any time as well as volunteer any special skills and talents you have to enrich our program. Please contact any member of the staff to let them know that you have something you would like to share. You will need to undergo a background check and be fingerprinted.

We will plan at least two family nights a year starting at 5:30 or 6:00 that include pot luck meals. Please take these opportunities to meet other families in the program and get acquainted with your child(ren)'s friends. If you are interested we will also schedule adult only meetings on PTO nights, either before or after the PTO meeting to give you an opportunity to tell us whether or not we are meeting your child's needs. Individual parent conferences will be scheduled at your request to review your child's progress.

We would like to have a **Parent Council** for the program. We need parent input to our decision making and as such, will conduct 2 parent surveys per year for your input.

From time to time the staff will create a wish list of items you may have around the house for craft projects. We can always use books, games and puzzles in good condition that your children have outgrown or no longer care to play with. Please think about us as a place for things you might otherwise throw away.

The most important way you can be involved with the program is to establish a partnership with the staff, to communicate to one another how things are going in your child's life. It is helpful for the staff to know about the celebrations and disruptions in your child's life like a new baby, serious illness, or death of someone close, as they often change your child's behavior. And you need to know if something has happened in the program that may have upset your child or given them reason to feel good about themselves so you can comfort or celebrate as is most appropriate. We can help you connect with expert help in the community if your family is experiencing special problems (as examples: health insurance for your children, divorce, a death in the family, housing issues, etc.).

We look forward to working with you and your child this year and hope you will let us know how we can help you and your child enjoy our program.

How to Reach Us:

You may call **854-4150** and leave a message for the Program Manager or other support staff at Central Office to contact you.

The Kendall School Site Coordinator is Rose Bernheim.

The Rowayton School Site Coordinator is Kathy Msaad.

After the Bell is administered by the Director of Elementary Operations, Ms. Marilyn Liberatore.

The Norwalk Education Foundation will also be supporting all aspects of the program:
www.norwalkeducation.org.