



The Safe, Fun & Meaningful After-School Experience

Parent Handbook 2014-2015



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Abby Paulson, Club J Director
Janet Carter, Club J Assistant Director

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A Note to Parents

Welcome to Club J! Please read this handbook carefully and thoroughly. We expect parents to help establish open communication with the Club J Director and Assistant Director. Please take the time to read all written and e-mail communications that are sent home from our program in order to stay up-to-date on policy changes and/or special programming opportunities. Here is some important contact information for you to use during the school year to reach us at Club J:

Abby Paulson – 678-812-3899 or abby.paulson@atlantajcc.org

Janet Carter – 678-812-3897 or janet.carter@atlantajcc.org

Club J Checkout table – 678-812-3895

Front Desk of MJCCA (to be used if unable to contact us and it is an emergency) – 678-812-4000

Club J Mission

The mission of Club J is to serve the Jewish community and the community at large by promoting caring relationships among children and adults, enabling children to develop their interests and expand their abilities, and offering children a sense of belonging to a greater community for which we are all responsible.

Goals

- Create a safe and fun environment where children can develop friendships and explore new ideas.
- Ensure that all children complete their homework on a daily basis with the assistance of their Counselors.
- Help children to develop empathy for others and learn to accept people's differences.
- Build self-confidence in children by helping them to expand their abilities and discover how their actions impact their relationships with others.
- Offer a variety of social, recreational, cultural and community service activities.
- Provide time for intellectual and academic pursuits, including offering homework help and special interest activities that expand upon school experiences.
- Teach Jewish values and traditions to children in order for them to understand their importance in, and responsibility to, our community and the world.

Jewish Programming at the MJCCA

The children's programs at The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta celebrate Jewish traditions and draw from a code of ethics that teaches us to respect and care for the earth and all of its inhabitants. Our MJCCA community is connected through this circle of care and respect, which expands to the broader world of all human life and nature. While we seek to affirm our Jewish children's cultural identity and enhance families' exploration of Judaism, we also honor and learn from the diverse experiences and traditions of all who participate in our programs.

Children enrolled in Club J will participate in a Shabbat celebration each Friday, in addition to numerous Judaic cultural and holiday activities throughout the year. These activities are a source of great joy and pride in our community, and we hope that all of the people from diverse backgrounds participating in our programs will gain an appreciation for the depth and beauty of our heritage.

We welcome your questions about our Jewish programming and will make every effort to keep children and parents informed about these activities throughout the year.

Club J Staff

All of the Club J Counselors participate regularly in school-aged trainings and workshops which are overseen by Bright from the Start, our licensing agency. Club J staff members are also certified in CPR, First Aid and AED use. Counselors strive to be trusted guides, while also ensuring that the children are actively and safely engaged in a range of interesting and fun experiences.

Times of Operation and Billing

Club J is housed at The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. We enroll children from Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade. Please note that our program closes for several religious and secular holidays throughout the year. Please refer to our calendar for specific dates of operation and closings.

- Club J hours are from 2:45 pm through 6:15 pm, Monday through Thursday and 2:45 pm through 6:00pm on Fridays.

Tuition is determined according to your child's scheduled attendance. Charges for Club J are debited from your credit card or checking account for the current month. Additionally, all Club J participants must be current members of The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. Any changes in your child's enrollment schedule must be approved in advance. Please provide written notification two weeks prior to the date the change will go into effect. Refunds for absences or missed days are not issued.

Transportation from School

Transportation to the MJCCA is provided at no additional charge for full Club J participants from Austin Elementary, Vanderlyn Elementary, Chesnut Elementary, Kingsley Elementary, Dunwoody Elementary, Peachtree Middle, Davis Academy, The Epstein School, and Atlanta Jewish Academy. A transportation fee will be charged to all participants who are not full Club J participants; otherwise, transportation is included within the Club J monthly fee. Three counselors will accompany the public school children on the bus and one staff person on each of the Private School buses. They will check the students onto the bus and ensure that everyone exits the bus upon arrival at the MJCCA. They will also maintain a safe and secure bus ride. The Bus Counselors will be in constant communication with the Club J Director via cell phone.

End-of-Day Pick Up

Parents or Guardians may pick up their child from the program at any time; however, they must be officially checked out from the Club J Checkout table. A staff member will be seated near the front desk at the entrance to the MJCCA from 3pm – 6:15pm (6:00pm on Fridays) to allow for an easier pick up. **You must know your child's dismissal number, which will be assigned to each family, and anyone else picking up your child must know this number. Otherwise, your child will not be released into their care.** All children must be picked up by 6:15 pm, except for Fridays, when they must be picked up by 6:00pm. Late

fees of \$1 per minute will be charged when pick up occurs after 6:15 pm or 6:00pm respectively and should be paid directly to the Club J staff.

Security

1. Children must be signed out from the Club J Checkout table upon pick up from Club J each day. **You may designate other individuals to pick up your child in the Club J Forms; however, they MUST know your child(ren)'s assigned dismissal number that has been given to you. If a person arrives to pick up your child that does not know your child's dismissal number, regardless of being on your designated pick-up list, then your child will not be released into their care until a parent is reached via phone. In that event, they must have picture identification with them to prove their identity.** In order to alleviate this problem, please be sure to tell your child's dismissal number to all potential individuals who might pick up your child during the year. However; do not give your child(ren)'s dismissal number to anyone that you feel you might not want to pick up your child(ren) at any point in the future. In this case, please email clubj@atlantajcc.org to let us know that a specific individual is picking up and we will check their identification instead of requiring the dismissal number. Prior notification must be made.
2. **Please submit a Club J Mail form from the website to notify the Club J staff if your child will not be attending our program on a regularly scheduled day.** We must be notified by 12:00 pm (noon) if your child will not attend. **When we are expecting to pick up a child at school, or if we are expecting a child to arrive on the bus, we will treat the child's absence as an emergency situation.**
3. All Club J staff will be in constant contact with the Club J Director via walkie-talkie. The Club J Director or Assistant Director will also carry a walkie-talkie connected with MJCCA Security and the front desk. Therefore; should an emergency occur, there will not be a delay in alerting the necessary resources.
4. Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Tornado and other emergency situation drills will be conducted every six months. This will allow the children and staff to know what to do and where to go in the event of an actual emergency. We will be sure to do these in a way that the children are not frightened or anxious by this process.

Snacks

Club J provides nutritious, child-friendly, kosher snacks daily. **If your child has any food restrictions or allergies, please let us know by indicating it on your child's Club J Forms.**

Club J Policies

Health & Medication

*In order to help us prevent the spread of illness amongst our staff and children, please keep sick children at home. **We are required to exclude sick children with the following symptoms or signs of illness for 24 hours.** We will call you to pick up your child when:*

1. **there is a fever of over 100 degrees.** If your child develops a fever, he or she must be fever-free, without fever medication, for 24 hours before returning to our program.
2. **there is diarrhea or vomiting.**
3. **your child has a communicable disease;** such as strep throat, viral blisters (chicken pox), impetigo, conjunctivitis or lice. These illnesses must be treated immediately and the child must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours before the child may return to our care.

Regarding medications, please be aware that we must:

1. Obtain a signed consent form to administer any over-the-counter, homeopathic or natural, and prescription medications. This form must specify dosage, times and dates to be administered. You may find these forms on the MJCCA website under Club J.
2. Dispense only medications that are in their original, labeled containers.
3. Confiscate any over-the-counter medications from children carrying such items.

Personal Property

The MJCCA is not responsible for lost or missing items. Children MUST refrain from bringing personal electronics equipment, trading cards, jewelry and other valuables to our program. Please make sure that jackets and sweatshirts are labeled with your child's first and last name, as these are the most common items to be misplaced. We will do our best to get items back to their proper owners. Please check our lost and found, located at the Club J check-out table regularly.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor activities may consist of field sports, nature walks or other outdoor activities. Therefore; please make sure that your child has sunscreen with them and a sweatshirt or jacket with them on days that it might get colder in the late afternoon.

Bus Safety

Club J strives to provide a safe, well-supervised, fun experience to all of its participants, including riding the bus. Children will be counted as they leave the bus, and all seats will be checked to ensure that no one is left behind! At no time will behaviors be permitted that endanger the safety of children or staff. Disrupting the driver, standing up or changing seats while the vehicle is moving, throwing things or putting hands or heads out the window, fighting, yelling, not listening to the bus counselor, driver, or other staff members on the bus, removing clothing or using foul or adult language, gestures or actions, are all considered to be inappropriate behaviors and will not be tolerated. Please assist us with explaining to your child what behaviors are and are not appropriate on the bus and what the consequences are of inappropriate behavior.

Should these rules and regulations not be adhered to; the following consequences will be instituted:

First Occurrence – The first time an incident happens will result in a verbal warning from staff to the child. If the behavior does not stop immediately, the child will be reported to the Club J Director, at which time a parent **may** be called or advised of the situation. **If the incident warrants it, the child may receive an immediate 1-3 day suspension from Club J, with no refund for those days.**

Second Occurrence – The second time an incident happens, the bus counselor or driver will report the issue to the Club J Director and there will be a phone call home. **In the case where severe behavior**

occurs on the bus, the camper may be given a 1-3 day suspension from Club J, with no refund for those days.

Third Occurrence – The third time a minor incident occurs will result in a second phone call home from the Club J Director. A three day suspension from Club J will be given with no refund.

Fourth Occurrence – The fourth minor incident will result in a one month suspension of child's transportation privileges without a refund.

Once this has taken place, any child returning after a one month suspension will be on probation with Club J and will be subject to immediate dismissal from Club J without refund, should any further problems occur.

Behavior Guidelines and Discipline Policy

The MJCCA wants all of our children to have a great time when they participate in Club J. We feel that it is our responsibility to engage the children in fun and meaningful group activities that give them a sense of belonging and freedom to express themselves. We understand that praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management. We also understand that we must act as role models for the children by paying attention to their interests and treating them with respect and kindness. We will set clear guidelines for them and will be consistent in our interactions with them.

We will make every effort to help children understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviors; however, it is important that children enrolled in our program are able to follow behavior expectations and to fully participate in program activities.

Parents/Guardians are required to inform the MJCCA in writing of any special circumstances that may affect the child's ability to participate fully and to stay within the guidelines of acceptable behavior – including behavioral problems, psychological, medical or physical conditions. In these circumstances, one-on-one counselors (facilitators), provided by and paid for by parents/guardians, are welcome in our program to help assist the child to participate and follow our behavior expectations. The MJCCA is not responsible for providing one-on-one care. Children enrolled in our programs must be capable of participating in a group care environment with a ratio of 1 staff to 15 children.

Behavior Expectations

- Children must cooperate with staff and follow directions.
- Children must respect other children, staff, MJCCA equipment and facilities.
- Children must stay with their designated group, adhering to our supervision requirements.
- Children must refrain from any behavior that threatens the safety or wellbeing of any staff person or child in our program, including themselves.
- **Threatening behaviors that are unacceptable include, but are not limited to:**
 - making fun of or insulting someone;
 - bullying;
 - making obscene gestures or comments or using foul language;
 - touching oneself or others inappropriately

revealing private parts of the body;
punching, kicking, slapping, biting or inappropriate physical contact of any kind;
taking someone's things or stealing;
writing nasty things about someone;
shouting at someone;
gossiping about someone;
threatening someone with physical violence....

Discipline Policy

Step One

Children who fail to meet the stated behavior expectations, or who participate in unacceptable behaviors as described above, will be given a verbal warning by their Counselor. At that time, staff will point out the unacceptable behavior, will discuss how this behavior affects others, and will offer suggestions for the child to use an alternative, positive behavior. Children will be guided in an age-appropriate manner. Younger children may require more coaching than older children, who will only receive one verbal warning. **If the incident warrants it, the child may receive an immediate 1-3 day suspension from Club J.**

Step Two

If a child continues to have difficulty with his or her behavior, the child's parent/guardian will be notified with an incident report and/or a phone call during program hours. The child will be asked to take responsibility for the behavior by describing the behavior to his or her parents/guardians. **We ask that parents assist us in helping children to be accountable for their own behaviors.** A child that admits to and takes responsibility for his or her mistakes is taking a step toward changing the behavior. At this point, the child will help to decide on a consequence for the behavior that will be designed to help change the behavior while in our program. (For example, a child that throws a ball at someone's head may become a referee for that game in the future, making sure nobody breaks the rules; or the child may be asked not to participate in a favorite activity for a time.)

Step Three

If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive or threatening, the child will be subject to suspension or dismissal, at which time refunds will not be given. Parents/guardians will be called immediately and asked to pick up the child right away. Depending upon the nature of the event, the child may be dismissed for the remainder of the day or suspended for more than one day. Our staff will work closely with parents to help a child succeed in group care, however, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to deal with any major difficulties that a child is having. If, after repeated interventions and attempts to help a child learn positive behaviors, the child continues to be unable to function in a group care environment, that child may be asked to leave our program permanently.

Behaviors that may lead to immediate dismissal, suspension or expulsion from our program without any prior incident; include but are not limited to:

fighting or other violent or dangerous behavior;

Inappropriate actions; including, but not limited to, cursing, bullying, conversations of an adult nature, exposing inappropriate body parts, inappropriate touching of oneself or another individual:

running away from their designated group area;

possession of a weapon of any kind;

vandalism or destruction of property;

theft...

Communication

We welcome an open line of communication between families and staff. You are always welcome to speak with the Club J Director or Assistant Director about any concerns that you may have. Please feel free to call or e-mail Abby Paulson at 678-812-3899 or abby.paulson@atlantajcc.org or Janet Carter at 678-812-3897 or janet.carter@atlantajcc.org.

We look forward to a Safe, Fun and Meaningful year with your child(ren), as well as getting to know your entire family!