Advantage After-School Programs

Program Locations
Fonda- Fultonville Elementary School
Fonda-Fultonville Middle School

Parent Handbook
2023 - 2024

A program administered by
The Mental Health Association in Fulton & Montgomery Counties, Inc.
ADVANTAGE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
SITE LOCATIONS: FONDA-FULTONVILLE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Program Coordinator: Maggie Arguelles

Telephone Number: (518) 853-4747 ext. 4090

Program Cell Phone Number: (518) 365-0041

The Afterschool Program at Fonda-Fultonville Elementary and Middle Schools operates from 2:30pm – 5:30pm, on days that school is in full session and after school activities have not been cancelled by the district due to inclimate weather, etc.

This program is available to youth who attend the Fonda-Fultonville elementary or middle school and are in grades Kindergarten through Eighth.

In case of a fire at the school, the primary relocation site for the youth in the Elementary School will be the Tennis Courts, and the secondary relocation site will be the Track Field behind the High School. For the Middle School, the primary relocation site will be field across from the parking lot (soccer field), and the secondary location will be the baseball field.

In cases where we cannot go back into the school the Program Coordinator will contact Browns Bus Service to send buses to the school and the students will be relocated to 20 Park Street (County Annex Bldg. parking lot) or the 2nd relocation site will be at the Johnstown High School Parking lot. 1 Sir Bills Circle, Johnstown
HANDBOOK

This handbook contains the POLICIES AND PROCEDURES of the ADVANTAGE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM.

PLEASE KEEP THIS BOOKLET TO REFER TO WHILE YOUR CHILD ATTENDS THE PROGRAM.

Funding is provided by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for a period of five years. There is no cost to parents/families. However, a nominal fee of $10 per month per child is asked per family. An inability to pay this fee has no impact on the child’s admission or continued enrollment in the program.

This program is a result of the active partnership of the Fonda-Fultonville School District and the Mental Health Association in Fulton & Montgomery Counties, with support from other community organizations.

The Advantage After-School program supports the development of youth programs designed to offer educational, interpersonal, and recreational activities to school age youth in safe and accessible places during non-school hours.

Mounting evidence shows that how children occupy their time during non-school hours is directly related to their ability to achieve in school and contribute to society. The critical hours from 3pm to 8pm are when the majority of crimes are committed by or against youth. These are also the hours where youth are most likely to engage in risky behaviors without adult supervision.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Advantage After-School Programs presents a safe, nurturing environment where children have opportunities to participate in activities that enhance and extend academic experiences while providing for positive social and emotional growth and development.

The parents, community members and school district takes ownership in the program and are involved in helping children make better life choices, enhance personal strengths and overcome weaknesses.

The participating school districts and Mental Health Association in Fulton & Montgomery Counties will work in conjunction and cooperation to meet the goals and objectives set forth by the Advantage After-School Grant and the school districts in which the program is offered.
ENROLLMENT POLICY

All students in the appropriate program grades are eligible to attend once enrolled by the parent/guardian. Participants are enrolled in the program on a first come first serve basis. Students attending 4-5 days per week are preferred. You will be notified as to when your child may start attending. A waiting list will be instituted when needed.

CUSTODY AND VISITATION

Certified copies of any court orders or divorce decrees provided by the custodial parent, which restricts a parent’s ability to seek release of his/her child, should be submitted to the School Liaison or Program Coordinator. Should a parent come to program and request to see his/her child, we cannot prohibit the action unless we have these documents. Therefore, it is imperative that we have the information immediately upon its dispensation.

HOURS

The Advantage After-School Program is a 3 hour program that is open Monday – Friday, directly following the normal school day dismissal time.

The program will NOT operate on early dismissal days, vacation days, snow days, and days of emergency school closings. If program is cancelled on a full session school day due to weather or some other reason, your child will be sent to the location written on the student release form.

If your child will not attend program on a given day, please notify us in advance by sending a note or email or call the school or AASP office.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When after-school activities are cancelled by the school district (for example, due to inclement weather) the AASP will NOT be held. Families must have a back-up plan that students can initiate if program is cancelled unexpectedly. Students need to know the family’s plan in advance.

PLEASE BE AWARE that the telephone number you provide the school district for emergency calls is the SAME number used to notify you of any early dismissals. Therefore, if the number you provide the school will not reach you during the day time, YOU MUST PROVIDE the AASP ANOTHER WAY to notify you.
PROHIBITED

Youth are not allowed to have MP3 players, cell phones, cameras, video games or other electronic items in the After-School Program. The above will be confiscated and sent home with parents.

Any item from home, including toys, stuffed animals, trading cards and sports equipment are to be kept in the child’s backpack and not used during program hours.

The After-School Program is not responsible for any child’s personal equipment or other items.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

USDA Meal
Participants will receive a healthy and nutritious snack daily. In most cases, this will occur shortly after the beginning of program. All food choices are in compliance with the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) and focus on good nutrition to combat childhood obesity.

After attendance and snack time, participants will be engaged in the following activities:

Homework/Tutoring Assistance
Staff members work with youth to help complete assignments and strengthen academic skills. Participants are responsible for bringing homework and if applicable, their homework agenda to the After-School Program as they will not be allowed in classrooms to obtain homework after the academic day dismissal. Therefore, it is the youth’s responsibility to come to program prepared with all belongings. If the child does not complete their homework in the allotted time, it is expected that they will finish it at home, so that they may participate in the other activities that the program offers. All homework completed at program should be submitted to the appropriate teacher (s) by the youth on the next school day or when it is due.

Recreation
Participants have the opportunity to participate in organized physical activities, to learn large and small motor skills, and good sportsmanship. 
**Sneakers are required for students to participate in exercise.**

Enrichment
Participants in the After-School Program may attend a variety of enrichment classes or clubs such as arts & crafts, STEM, international club, cooking club, computer, youth planning council, photography club, group exercises, and other programs based on student interests.
Service Learning Projects
When children feel a part of the community, they become more connected to family and friends, and develop a positive outlook for the future. Participants have the opportunity to take part in various service projects – projects that help members of their school and local community and, at the same time, expand the children’s view of the world.

Workshops
Several community agencies offer workshops and presentations to the students that inspire students to make positive choices and to develop high goals of themselves. Topics address boundaries, emotional and mental wellness, abstinence from tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, safety, goal setting, good decisions, and a yearly Career Exploration Week.

Aquatic Activities
If the school pool is available during program, a written signed permission slip will be required prior to the start of this activity.

FIRE AND SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS
Each month fire drills are conducted during different times and with different egress strategies at the after school program to ensure all children and youth know the various exit routes of the building(s) in the event of a real fire.

Shelter in Place is a response to an emergency that creates a situation in which it is safer to remain in the building/afterschool program rather than to evacuate. Most situations calling for sheltering in place are in response to events that have a relatively short duration of hours, not days or weeks. Some situations that might require sheltering in place are: severe weather conditions; a public disturbance that escalated to violent acts; a chemical or biological spill; or rabid animal sighting.

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of when a Shelter in Place drill is scheduled.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
It is expected that a child who is enrolled in the program will attend every day they attend school unless ill or excused for special circumstances. The program will set a reasonable time (3 weeks) for regular attendance to resume before an enrollee is placed on inactive enrollment and not counted as a part of the program’s list of enrollees. An enrollee who is on inactive enrollment can be given preference to resume regular enrollment in the program when slots become available for new enrollees.

Daily attendance is taken when your child comes to the Advantage After-School Program. Please notify the program coordinator if your child will be absent. This is important so that all children who are scheduled to attend are accounted for.
If a child is scheduled to attend but does not arrive, we will look for the child within the school building, including communication with the school office and transportation department, and outdoor school property. However, if we do not find him/her, then we will:

1. Contact parent(s) and if unavailable, then
2. Contact the persons whose names you provided us on the emergency data section of the enrollment form.
3. Lastly, if your child is not found, we will contact the local law enforcement agency and report your child as missing. We will do this so we can make certain your child is out of danger.

**PICK UP POLICY**

Parents are required to pick up their children before the designated closing time of Program. For your child’s safety, it is required that you enter the school building to sign out your child. After-School Program staff will notify your child/ren of your arrival. Program staff will not release your child to anyone who is not on your authorized list. Persons may be added and removed as the parent/guardian deems necessary. However, this can only be done in writing. Phone calls are not accepted.

Always be on time to pick up your child from the After-School Program. If you are going to be late on account of an emergency, you must notify the program coordinator. If your child has not been picked up by closing time, our staff will try to contact you and/or anyone listed on the registration/student release form. If no one can be reached, local authorities will be contacted. Therefore, it is extremely important to have up-to-date, accurate information for you or anyone listed as a contact on the student release form.

Any youth who is not picked up by a parent or person listed on the Registration Form by closing time is considered late. Parents/guardians will incur a late fee of $50.00 for every 15 minute period, or fraction thereof, a child remains at program beyond closing time. This fee is used to pay the staff members who must remain with the youth and the payment is due within one week of the late pick-up date on the Statement of Late Pick-Up Fee form.

**SCHOOL BUS POLICY**

Students who receive transportation from the school district will need a note from their caregiver stating that the child is to come to the after-school program, rather than take the bus. Also, it is important that the Student Release Form is current and accurate so in case the school closes early your child is aware of his/her transportation route to home, e.g. bus; pick-up.
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent and guardian involvement are strongly encouraged at the After-School Program.

You are welcome to visit at any time and encouraged to become a regular volunteer. Volunteers are needed to plan and chaperone special events, to provide enrichment activities, and to participate in the program’s annual Career Week. Please contact the Program Coordinator if you are able to volunteer in the After-School Program.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS

The Program Coordinator, in collaboration with the Site Supervisor will determine strategies for any behavioral incident that is considered a safety risk or an inappropriate experience/interaction with another child. The use of redirection will be implemented by staff initially while the child is still in the current setting. If that does not prove beneficial for the child, a staff member will either sit and support that child while still in their current environment and/or offer the child the opportunity to move away from that setting and go read a book together, go for a walk, or do a learning activity, e.g. cross-word, puzzle. This will be done in an attempt to help the child self-regulate his/her emotions and bodily actions. If none of these interventions are successful a call to the parents/guardians will be made so the child can speak to his/her parent/guardians in an attempt to have the child return to a positive baseline behavior. If the call does not help the child then the parent/guardian(s) will be asked to now pick up the child at program.

Following several serious incidents, a meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian, Program Coordinator and/or Site Supervisor to determine if the child requires a more controlled, smaller setting than the After-School Program can provide. At that point in time, the student may be discharged from program for the remainder of the school semester. The student may return to program the following semester with a clean slate if prior approval from the Program Coordinator is granted.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

School Code of Conduct
The students are familiar with the codes of conduct and discipline standards established by the school districts in which they attend. Therefore, the regulations and expectations utilized in the after-school program are based upon these regulations.

Disciplining students can be a very sensitive subject for all involved: students, parents and staff. To ensure we use uniform procedures, there is a significant amount of background information provided here.

Philosophy
All persons have a lot of choice in their behaviors, that is, we can choose how we respond to different situations. It is important to remember that with this power of choice, we
must be held responsible for our actions. Students and adults alike tend to choose behaviors that fulfill their needs.

Occasionally, behavior problems arise that require discipline. **The best types of discipline result in some growth for the student.** Discipline teaches appropriate behaviors in order for students to have a healthy relationship with others and a good sense of their own self-worth. This process of teaching students how to behave appropriately also addresses the importance of respecting the individual student, group and staff. Good discipline provides opportunities for students to learn from mistakes, negligence or impulsiveness.

**OCFS School Age Child Care Regulations**
Disciplining a student implies that staff guide students’ behaviors “to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care”.

“The staff must use acceptable techniques and approaches to help children solve problems.” Corporal punishment is prohibited. “Behavior management must promote self-esteem in children and guide children in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care.”

(NYS OCFS School-Age Child Care Regulations)

**BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT**

*We expect youth will learn to:*
- Identify and recognize other options available to the student at the time of the incident
- Assume self-control
- Accept personal responsibility and
- Make amends as necessary.

*What are the consequences for misconduct?*
When a child’s behavior causes concern, a staff member will speak with the youth and consequences will be determined by the Site Supervisor and/or Program Coordinator. Consequences for any behavior that causes concern range from:
- 1). Separation from the group for a brief period of time,
- 2). Separation from the group for the remainder of the day, and
- 3). Program suspension from one to five days.

Following several serious incidents, the youth may be discharged from program for the remainder of the school semester. The participant may return the following semester with a clean slate if prior approval is granted from the Program Coordinator.
At the After-School Program, the behaviors listed below are of grave concern to the program staff due to the risks that they pose for the safety and well-being of the other youth, staff, and community members who may be at program. These actions cannot be tolerated and may result in the immediate discharge from program for the remainder of the school year:

- **Assault** – Physically hitting or injuring others.
- **Unsafe Behavior** – Any serious, intentional incident that could cause physical injury to others.
- **Larceny** – stealing from any person, school, organization or business.
- **Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, matches or lighters.**
- **Carrying, brandishing, or threatening with any type of weapon**

HEALTH INFORMATION

**Illness Policy**
If an After-School Program participant becomes ill, a parent or authorized person will be called to pick up the child.

**Emergency/Health Information**
Parents are asked to provide emergency information on the After-School Program Registration Form. Information needed includes home and work phone numbers, name and phone number of your child’s physician, information regarding his/her medication needs, and your child’s medical history. It is important that the After-School Program has this information and that it is current at all times.

Please notify the Program Coordinator of any changes in health information or contact information.

**Independent Toileting**
Children must be able to self toilet as well as be able to communicate with staff in a timely manner regarding their needs to use the bathroom facilities.

**Medications**
The After-School Program has staff certified to administer medications. If your child needs medication during program hours please make the necessary arrangements with the Program Coordinator.

**First Aid/Accidents**
If a child is slightly injured while attending the After-School Program, First Aid will be administered and an Incident Report will be filed. Site staff is trained in First Aid; and the parent/guardian will be notified about the injury that day when they come to pick up their child.
Serious Injury
If a child is seriously injured or has a medical emergency while attending the After-School Program, emergency services will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital. Every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person listed on the child’s registration form. The emergency information you have provided will be taken to the hospital.

The parent authorizing treatment will be that parent signing the After-School Program Enrollment Form. That person will be the responsible party for the child receiving treatment regarding payment of all treatment costs associated with the injury.

It is vital that the emergency information regarding your child be kept current

WHO ARE THE STAFF MEMBERS?

Program Aides, Assistants and Supervisors work directly with the students; they model and encourage appropriate behaviors in a positive, constructive environment. Program Assistants plan and implement activities suitable for the children’s abilities and learning styles while providing direction and oversight to Program Aides. They work in collaboration with the Site Supervisor who supervises students and oversees the staff and daily activities.

The School Liaison works with parents to facilitate a stronger relationship between the school and the family. Also, as a reminder, when an individual on your child’s release form is coming to pick up him/her, please make sure they are bringing a valid picture identification card with them. This to ensure your child’s safety.

All staff report to the Program Coordinator, who, collaboratively work with the Site Supervisor overseeing the daily operations of the program. The Program Coordinator reports to the Community Services Director who in turn reports to the Executive Director of the Mental Health Association in Fulton & Montgomery Counties who renders any final determinations.
WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Questions regarding your child’s activities or behaviors may be discussed in person with staff who directly works with your child or the Program Site Supervisor. Additionally, you may contact the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator or designated person in charge is at the program every day. The MHA Community Services Director can be reached at 518-762-5332. Additionally, if you have concerns or complaints that you feel have not been properly addressed the OCFS Division of Child Care Services has a toll-free complaint line (800)732-5207. The website is ocfs.ny.gov and Part 414 School-Age Child Care Regulations can be located on this website.

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All childcare providers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect in New York State. The Advantage After-School Program will report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child participating in our program to the New York State Central Registry.

If you suspect a child is being abused or maltreated in New York State, call the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Neglect at 1-800-342-3720. The Child Abuse Hotline is open 24 hours a day; every day of the year. Information is attached to this handbook regarding recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

A copy of the OCFS school–age program regulations, along with the names, addresses and phone numbers of people with administration authority is available for your viewing at the desk of the School Liaison.
ADVANTAGE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Program Policies Agreement 2023-2024

Advantage After School Program Site Location: ________________

Student’s Name (please print) ____________________________ Grade _____

Student’s Name (please print) ____________________________ Grade _____

Student’s Name (please print) ____________________________ Grade _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN:

➢ I have received the 2023-2024 AASP Parent Handbook and agree to familiarize myself with its policies and procedures. Yes ☐ No ☐

➢ I understand that I am responsible to follow the policies and procedures described within the AASP Parent Handbook. Yes ☐ No ☐

➢ I agree to speak with my child/children concerning the described behavior expectations and consequences. Yes ☐ No ☐

Parent/Guardian Signature________________________________ Date ____________

Parent/Guardian Signature________________________________ Date ____________

A PROGRAM OF THE
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Executive Director: Janine Dykeman

PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM
Would you like to volunteer at our After School Program?

Parent volunteers are extremely valuable components of the educational process. Acting as a parent volunteer is a great way to find out what goes on in your child’s after school program and to help support your program and school. Because of the tremendous impact that parent volunteers can have on students, we believe that all parent volunteers should possess the following personal characteristics:

› You must like and enjoy working with children.
› You must feel that being a parent volunteer is an important position, worthy of your time and effort.
› You must be willing to work with many different students in a variety of situations.
› You must be able to accept the responsibility that goes along with your position.
› You must be of good and reliable character.

If you are interested in being a parent volunteer, please fill out the remainder of this form and return it to the After School Program Coordinator.

__________________________________________  __________________________________________  __________________________________________
Your Name                                                                                   Phone                                                           E-Mail

Your child(ren)’s Name(s):   ___________________________   Grade:   ________

   ____________________________________________________________  ________

1. In which activities would you like to volunteer?
   □ Homework Help
   □ Tutoring
   □ Family Nights / Special Events
   □ Other ____________________________________________________________

2. Which areas of knowledge or expertise would you be willing to offer to the program?
   □ Computer skills
   □ Reading
   □ Other ____________________________________________________________
   □ My hobby _________________________________________________________
   □ My career _________________________________________________________
   □ My cultural heritage _______________________________________________

3. When are you available to volunteer in the program?
Thank you for sharing your time with our After School Program.