



Anchor Club Enrichment Program
(ACE Program)
Parent Handbook



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Our Mission

The Anchor Club Enrichment program serves Stonington students and families during out-of-school times. It is our mission to inspire children to thrive and to encourage curiosity through exploration and ingenuity in a safe, school-based environment. By developing partnerships within the community, we aim to nurture a life-long love of learning and the confidence to succeed in any situation.

“We believe in you”

Our Vision

To be a program that motivates participants in
***developing social intelligence**
***fostering forward-thinking**
***inspiring innovative ideas**
***encouraging civic literacy**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your interest in the Anchor Club Enrichment Program, offered through Stonington Public Schools. This program provides quality developmental activities before and after school and during selected out-of-school time periods for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Activities are designed to encourage children’s social, cognitive, physical, and emotional growth under the watchful eye of qualified staff members. Our staff consists of professionals with experience in child development and academic and recreational activities. Staff members are employed by the Stonington Public Schools and have undergone fingerprinting and a law enforcement background check. In addition, staff members are CPR certified.

We are all committed to providing high-quality services, enrichment, and recreational activities, as well as promoting child development through individual and group activities. In addition to reinforcing core academic concepts through homework help, reading assistance, and hands-on activities, the program curriculum incorporates health and wellness, technology, and the arts.

We aim to support our community and working families by providing an affordable, engaging, and reliable Before and After School program throughout the school year.

We understand there will be opportunities for continual improvement of the program, and I urge you to provide feedback on how we are doing at any time. Welcome to the Anchor Club Enrichment Program (also known as ACE!)

With Warm Regards,

Nikki Salaun

Extended Learning Director
Stonington Public Schools

Program Overview

The **Anchor Club Enrichment (ACE)** Program provides students in grades kindergarten through five with high-quality before and/or after school programming that promotes students' academic and personal growth, while providing an affordable childcare option for working parents/guardians. Program expenses will be fully supported through grant funding through the end of the 23/24 school year, and no parent/guardian fees shall be charged.

Days/Hours of Operation

The program follows the Stonington Public Schools' calendar and operates on days when school is in session. During the 2023/2024 school year, the program will begin on September 5th for First – Fifth Grade students. Kindergarten students in the Before School program may also begin attending on the September 5, however Kindergarten Students in the After School program will not be able to attend until Thursday September 7th due to the Early Release days scheduled on the 5th and 6th for all Kindergarten students. The ACE Program will end on the last full day of school. Please refer to the 2023/2024 School Calendar for holidays and school/program closings.

Regular Hours

The program will operate both before and after school. The morning program will open at 7:00 AM and students will be dismissed by program staff to Breakfast or to their classrooms. In the afternoon, students will be dismissed to the cafeteria, and the program will remain open until 6:00 PM. Drop-off and pick-up will be at the WVSS cafeteria.

Scheduled Early Release Days

Extended programming will be offered to students enrolled in the after-school program on scheduled early release days. The program will remain open from the end of the school day until the regular closing time of 6 PM. Because there will often be special program enrichments on these days, students must be signed up in advance for these program dates. The Program Director will issue sign-up instructions up to 4 weeks but no less than 2 weeks in advance of the program date. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to follow instructions to ensure proper enrollment in the Extended Day programs. Students who are enrolled in the After School program but not scheduled to attend on the day of the Early Release may request Drop-In Care. The request will only be met if there is space available. Any open spaces will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Emergency Delays & Dismissals

Changes to school hours may impact program hours, and parents/guardians will be notified of any change with as much advance notice as possible. The following are potential scenarios and how they will be managed:

Delayed Opening –The Before School program will follow any delays deemed necessary by the Superintendent of Schools. In the event of a school day delay, the ACE Program will have the same time delay for opening. For example, if there is a 2-hour delay for school, ACE Program will also open 2 hours later (9:00 AM versus the regular 7:00 AM opening time).

Early Dismissal – The After School program will be closed if school is dismissed early due to inclement weather. Parents/guardians must determine an alternate dismissal plan for their student in advance. This is done by completing the Emergency Dismissal Form included in the Parent Packet given to each family at the start of enrollment. Teachers and offices will be provided with a list of students and their inclement weather dismissal plans at the start of the school year and will follow these plans if the Superintendent determines that an early dismissal is necessary.

After-School Activities Canceled – The program may be if after-school activities are canceled. The Superintendent of Schools will determine when this action is necessary to keep participants and staff safe. The Superintendent will indicate this decision with an announcement to parents/guardians. When the After School Program is canceled, students will be dismissed from school according to the plan indicated on the Emergency Dismissal Form. If that plan needs to change, parents should send an email to the ACE Program director and the main office at the school.

Program Enrollment

Each family that enrolls a student in the program must first complete the required registration paperwork. This will be followed by an e-mail from the Program Director with confirmation of availability and details on next steps. The Director shall e-mail within two business days, and the child's spot in the program shall be secure for two business days following the initial correspondence. This timely communication is particularly important if a waitlist exists.

Program Withdrawal

We understand that family schedules and needs change, and program withdrawals are permitted at any time. To allow for proper staffing and the opportunity to fill your student's spot in the program, please provide a minimum of two-week notice. All withdrawals should be made in writing to the Program Director.

Transportation

Transportation to/from the program is not available.

Attendance Policy

Students who select Monday through Friday enrollment will be given priority over those who request to attend part-time. Requests for part-time enrollment will be considered based on program and staffing availability on the requested day(s). Drop-in care is not available.

Given the limited availability of spots in the program, children are expected to attend regularly on their scheduled days. Repeated absences may result in the loss of a child's spot in the program. The parent/guardian will be contacted at least one week in advance if this decision is being considered.

After School Absence Notification

Parents/guardians must *inform both the Program Director and the WVSS office* if their student will be absent on an afternoon that s/he is scheduled to attend the program. Additionally, written notice must be received in advance from a parent/guardian if a student is to attend a different activity in the building on a day that s/he is scheduled to be at the after-school program.

Before School Check-In Procedure

Students must be accompanied into the building and signed in by their parent/guardian each day. Students may not be dropped off at the entrance of the building or be sent in alone.

After School Check-In Procedure

Program staff will follow a daily process to ensure that all students have arrived safely to the designated check-in area as follows:

1. Prior to school dismissal, check for parent/guardian notes regarding changes in schedule and with the main office to determine if any student has been dismissed early.
2. Students will be greeted upon arrival at the designated area and checked off on the attendance log. The tracking process will immediately ensue for any student who does not report as scheduled.

Tracking of Students Who Do Not Report as Scheduled

The tracking steps include the following actions:

1. Contact the WVSS main office to make an announcement over the PA system.
2. Check with the child's teacher to determine if s/he is still in the classroom.
3. Contact parent/guardian or, if parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts.
4. Contact the bus company to determine whether s/he was inadvertently placed on the bus.
5. If no contact can be made, local law enforcement will be engaged.

Please understand that this process is taken very seriously, and it is imperative that program staff are informed in advance of any changes in a student's schedule. Repeated failure to report absences may jeopardize your student's spot in the program.

Signing Out

A parent/guardian, or authorized emergency contact over the age of 18, must enter the building to sign the student out each day. A sign-out form will be readily available. If an emergency arises and results in the need for a person not listed on the registration form to pick a student up, the parent/guardian must send an e-mail to inform the Program Director of the change. This must come from the e-mail address listed on the registration form. Please inform those who may pick your student up that they will be required to provide photo identification for the student to be released.

Daily Activities & Schedule

The ACE Program strives to provide activities and enrichment opportunities that complement the school day while addressing the needs of the whole child. Activities will vary by program and day, with the following components regularly incorporated: snacks, attendance, homework assistance, wellness breaks, and enrichment activities.

Before School Programming

The first portion of the morning program will be student-driven based on their needs and/or interests. Students may complete homework assignments or choose from a variety of stations, such as Legos or other building activities, board games, or art supplies. The offered stations will be rotated and replenished frequently to ensure continued student interest. While this portion of the program may involve individual or

group activities, each day will conclude with group time as the students have a wellness break before heading to class.

Students can be dropped off for the morning session anytime between 7:00 AM – 8:20 AM. Students arriving after 8:20 AM will not be allowed to join the program and will instead need to wait (with a parent/adult) until 8:30 AM, when students can arrive to school. Program Drop-Off takes place in the cafeteria. Please use the cafeteria door on the far-right side of the building (This door can be identified by the program sign hanging outside). For security reasons, this door is kept locked and there is a doorbell to alert staff of your arrival. Parents may park in the driveway in front of the door, however there is no parking there after 8:30AM (this is the Bus Lane and must be clear prior to the arrival of the buses).

After School Programming

The afternoon schedule will be more structured and driven by a daily schedule and pre-planned activities. Below are typical schedules for each location.

Sample Schedule:

SCHEDULE	ACTIVITY
3:30 – 4:30 PM	<p>Snack, Homework and Meeting</p> <p>All students will be dismissed from their classrooms to the WVSS cafeteria, where they will connect with ACE Program staff to check in and receive District provided snacks. Students will transition from Snack Time directly to Homework/Tutoring time, until approximately 4:15PM. During this time, certified teachers will be present to offer support/instruction to students in need. ACE staff will also be present to guide students through understanding and completing assignments. There will be no Homework/Tutoring on Fridays. Homework Time will close with a group meeting where students gather to review and discuss the schedule of activities and any needs/expectations for the day.</p>
4:30 – 5:30 PM <i>(Enrichment classes are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 4:00 – 5:00 PM)</i>	<p>Activities and Enrichments</p> <p>Each day, students will be exposed to a variety of activity options. These will include enrichment classes, outdoor activities, and hands-on learning in a variety of subject areas: Arts, Crafts, STEAM, Fitness, Science, Biology, Music, Movement, etc. Some enrichments will be electives and others will require participation from all students enrolled in the After School session. Enrichment classes will vary between age-specific and mixed-age groups.</p>
5:30 – 6:00 PM	<p>Free Play</p> <p>Free play activities will be available for student use while they await the arrival of their parent/guardian.</p>

Student pick-up before 4:00 PM is discouraged as we are just settling in from the transition from school to program. If your student is participating in an enrichment class (Tues-Thurs) please plan to pick up after 5:30 PM. All students must be picked up and out of the building **by** 6:00 PM. Student Pick-Up takes place in the cafeteria and authorized adults should use the cafeteria door on the far-right side of the building (This door can be identified by the program sign hanging outside) to enter the building. For security reasons, this door is kept locked and there is a doorbell to alert staff of your arrival. Parking in the driveway near the door is allowed. Please remember to bring a photo ID when picking up. Staff members are required to check ID's if they do not recognize you.

ACE Program understands that parent/guardian needs and family schedules will dictate individual Pick-Up and Drop-Off times, and an estimate is requested on the registration form for planning purposes only. **Please note, students absent from school may not attend either the Before or After School program session. If your student is picked up from school early, s/he is also precluded from attending the After School program. Students must be present at school dismissal to attend the After School session.**

Homework Policy

To create an environment that is conducive to focusing and completing work, all students will be required to participate in the homework-help portion of the schedule. Please let the Program Director know if you have specific expectations regarding schoolwork being done at home or in the program. Students who do not have classroom work to do during Homework Time will be asked to read quietly for 10 minutes. Upon completion of reading, those students will be given the opportunity to color, draw, or do puzzles and brainteasers.

Enrichment Programming

Over the course of the school year, there will be five sessions of enrichment classes. These classes will take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 4:00 – 5:00 PM. The ACE Program will partner with local professionals and agencies, in combination with the ACE Program staff, to offer hands-on classes that will provide participants with opportunities to explore different areas of interest. Each session will provide a combination of elective and assigned class options – some of these options may also be age-specific. A letter/email will be sent to all families prior to the start of each session providing details about classes being offered and instructions for signing up to participate. It is important that parents help to promote student participation in these classes.

Staffing & Supervision

The Program Director has a significant amount of experience in out-of-school learning. The Director oversees all aspects of the program and visits the program frequently to ensure that policies are being followed and quality programming is taking place. S/he also works in conjunction with staff to design and execute a schedule of activities. All staff members are required to become trained and certified in first aid and CPR.

First Aid Policy

In the case of a minor accident or injury, first aid/CPR-certified staff will administer basic first aid. The parent/guardian will receive a notice with basic information about the minor injury. Please note, this form requires a parent's signature and will be kept in your student's file. A copy of this report will be furnished for the parents upon request.

If the injury or illness is more serious but not life-threatening, first aid will be administered and the student's parent/guardian and/or emergency contact will be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action.

If any injury or illness is life-threatening, emergency personnel will be contacted immediately, the parent/guardian and/or emergency contact will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff will not transport children in staff-owned vehicles.

All injuries and illnesses will be documented on individual report forms. For injuries that require medical

intervention, staff will prepare an incident/injury report detailing the nature of the incident, the cause (if known), and details on any medical interventions administered.

Student Illness

Students who have a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or who are vomiting shall not attend the program for 24 hours after the fever is reduced without medication or after vomiting has ceased. In addition, students demonstrating the inability to participate in program activities due to general feelings of malaise, or due to excessive coughing, sneezing, runny nose/eyes, or displaying an unidentified rash will be excluded from the program until symptoms subside or the student is under the care of a medical professional. Exhibiting these symptoms during program hours will result in program staff contacting the parent/guardian and/or emergency contacts to arrange for the student to be picked up within thirty minutes. Students who stay home because of illness, or who become ill during the school day and are dismissed early, should not attend after-school programming.

Mandated Reporting

Connecticut General Statutes identify professionals who, because their work involves regular contact with children, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. All program staff are mandated reporters under Connecticut law.

In accordance with state law, all mandated reporters are required to report suspected abuse when there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 years has been abused or neglected, has had non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of such injury, or is placed at imminent risk of serious harm.

A mandated reporter shall make an oral report by telephone to the Department of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency as soon as possible, but no later than twelve hours after the mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected. The mandated reporter shall inform the Program Director that s/he is making such a report, who will in turn inform the student's building principal. Not later than 48 hours after making an oral report, the mandated reporter shall submit a written report to the Department. The mandated reporter shall give a copy of the written report to the building principal or designee, as well as to the Program Director.

Student Behavioral Expectations

It is the goal of the Board and the program to ensure the safety and welfare of all students in attendance and to maintain an atmosphere that is safe and inclusive. In keeping with this goal, students are expected to comply with school rules and regulations, as well as Board policies. Students may be disciplined for any conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive to the program, or violates a publicized policy of the Board.

Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is a privilege and not an entitlement. Students involved in such programs are expected to follow all school rules and demonstrate good citizenship. Failure to do so may result in partial or complete exclusion from said activities and programs.

At a minimum, students are expected to:

1. Follow the directions of staff, volunteers, or outside organizations delivering instruction.
2. Show respect and speak kindly to others.
3. Keep hands and feet to themselves.
4. Ask permission to leave an area.

5. Use equipment and materials properly, carefully, and with respect.
6. Clean up after themselves.

Disciplinary Procedures

Program staff will use restorative practices to help guide students towards appropriate behavior. Should this not be an effective mode of altering behaviors, the following procedures will be followed for minor rule violations:

1. First Occurrence: The student will receive a verbal warning. The behavior will be documented by staff, but the student will not be written up.
2. Second Occurrence: The student will receive a written warning. The student's parent/guardian will be contacted, and the issue will be discussed. The staff person, parent/guardian, and student will establish an agreed upon strategy to allow for success moving forward.
3. Third Occurrence: Repeated rule violations will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or expulsion.

At the discretion of the program and school administration, a student may be removed from the program immediately for any action or behavior that threatens the health, safety, or security of the student committing the act, the program staff, and/or other students.

Upon enrollment and each year thereafter, parents are required to read and sign the ACE Program's Student Discipline Policy. This policy is contained in the Parent Packet, provided upon annual registration for the program.

Parent/Guardian Statement of Agreement and Understanding

I have read, understand, and agree to the practices, program standards and policies stated in the 2023/2024 Parent Handbook. I agree to do my part to ensure that my student meets the expectations for attendance and participation, and I understand that I am a partner in this commitment and to the terms stated herein. As a partner, I agree to do my part to ensure effective and efficient communication regarding my student’s needs and enrollment in all aspects of the Anchor Club Enrichment program. I understand that these terms and conditions are applicable for the 2023/2024 school year and that any changes to these terms will be provided to me in writing.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

