



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

7TH GRADE INITIATIVE PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

YMCA OF GREATER BRANDYWINE

Revised December 2024

YMCA OF GREATER BRANDYWINE ymcagbw.org

ASSOCIATION OFFICE One East Chestnut Street, West Chester, PA 19380 610-643-9622 **COATESVILLE YMCA** 295 Hurley Road, Coatesville, PA 19320 610-380-9622
JENNERSVILLE YMCA 880 West Baltimore Pike, West Grove, PA 19390 610-869-9622 **KENNETT AREA YMCA** 101 Race Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 610-444-9622
LIONVILLE COMMUNITY YMCA 100 Devon Drive, Exton, PA 19341 610-363-9622 **OCTORARA PROGRAM CENTER** 104 Highland Road, Suite 1, Atglen, PA 19310 610-593-9622
OSCAR LASKO YMCA AND CHILDCARE CENTER One East Chestnut Street, West Chester, PA 19380 610-696-9622 **UPPER MAIN LINE YMCA** 1416 Berwyn-Paoli Road, Berwyn, PA 19312 610-647-9622
WEST CHESTER AREA YMCA 605 Airport Road, West Chester, PA 19380 610-431-9622 **YMCA PICKLEBALL CENTER AT DOWNINGTOWN** 901 Skelp Level Road, Downingtown, PA 19335 267-794-9622



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MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCA is a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body.

7TH GRADE INITIATIVE PROGRAM GOALS

The YMCA of Greater Brandywine's 7th Grade Initiative offers free memberships to all 7th graders in the service area, promoting the well-being of mind, body, and spirit during this crucial developmental stage. The program provides a safe space for building friendships, fostering healthy living, and guiding youth away from negative influences. By encouraging physical activity, supportive connections, and mental well-being, participants will improve their fitness, adopt healthier habits, and gain the confidence to pursue lifelong health goals.

- **MIND - Mental Health and Wellness Support:**

Youth will have opportunities to engage with Y staff and mentors in group discussions and activities aimed at fostering peer support, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and building a sense of community. These interactions may include workshops and activities designed to promote mindfulness, stress management, and emotional resilience, providing participants with valuable tools for mental well-being.

- **BODY - Fitness and Nutrition:**

Youth will participate in activities, workshops, and evidence-based health programs focused on understanding healthy habits, alongside fitness challenges designed to motivate them and promote physical activity.

- **SPIRIT - Community Building and Support:**

Youth will build a sense of community through service-learning projects and group activities, while also engaging in open discussions about personal growth, values, and experiences to foster belonging and personal development.

Our staff is dedicated to fostering a positive environment focused on our four core values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. To ensure that everyone benefits from the program, active participation and inclusion from all members are essential.

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MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Each 7th Grader will receive a FREE youth membership, valid through August 31st of the following summer after completing 7th grade.

Steps to Receive a Membership:

- 1. Register Online** - Visit www.ymcagbw.org/ymca-activity-finder, search "7th Grade Initiative" in the Keyword box, and complete all required forms during the registration process.
- 2. Activate Membership** - Visit a Y branch with a parent or guardian to activate the membership.
- 3. Complete Youth Fitness Orientation** - Register for and attend the mandatory orientation within 2 weeks of activating the membership. A parent or guardian is encouraged to attend, as a Wellness Orientation Sheet will require a signature upon completion. You can register for orientation at the front desk or via the YGBW App.

How to Register for Youth Fitness Orientation via the YGBW App:

- 1. Download the YGBW App** - Search "YGBW" in the App Store (iOS) or Google Play Store (Android) and download it.
- 2. Log In** - Use your YMCA membership credentials. If you don't have an account, create one with the email linked to your membership.
- 3. Choose Your Branch** - Tap the branch name at the top right and select your preferred location.
- 4. Find 'Orientations and Assessments'** - On the home screen, select this option.
- 5. Choose a Date** - Look for "7th Grade Initiative Wellness Orientation" and pick a date and time.
- 6. Reserve Your Spot** - Tap "Reserve" and follow the steps to complete your registration. Confirm all details before submitting.

Membership Guidelines:

- All 7th Grade members will receive a membership card, which must be shown at each visit to verify membership.
- Members have access to all eight YMCA indoor facilities, including the Fitness Center, Open Gym, Group Exercise Classes, and Swimming Pools. Outdoor pool access is available at select locations for an additional fee.
- Members can participate in exclusive events and recreational activities, with reduced pricing on Y programs.
- Members must follow program rules and the YMCA Member Code of Conduct. Violations may result in suspension or revocation of membership.
- 7th Grade members cannot bring guests.
- For more details, refer to the '7th Grade Initiative FAQ Sheet' and the YMCA Membership Handbook.

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YOUTH CONDUCT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

Program Member Conduct:

Respect one another's feelings, property and selves. This includes not fighting, hitting or inappropriately touching another person or their belongings. A continuation of any of the listed actions may result in the cancellation of the child's membership in the program.

- Respect fellow YMCA members.
- Respect and listen to the staff.
- Stay with the program group during all meeting times, unless otherwise directed.
- Use proper language and tone of voice.
- Tell a member of the staff if someone is bothering or upsetting you.
- Respect the YMCA property and help maintain a clean facility.
- Do not destroy or damage property or equipment.
- We recommend that all personal items, including toys, iPads, electronic games, portable devices, and similar objects, be left at home. Cell phones and AirPods are permitted, but students are responsible for their safety and security.
- The YMCA of Greater Brandywine is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Conduct Response Guidelines:

1. **Initial Intervention:** If a youth member displays unsafe or inappropriate behavior, staff will intervene respectfully to address the issue.
2. **Guidance and Correction:** Staff will explain what behavior is inappropriate and provide instructions for the safe use of equipment or acceptable behavior for the area.
3. **Continued Misconduct:** If the behavior persists, staff will reiterate the issue and ask the youth member to leave the facility for the day.
4. **Documentation and Notification:** Staff will document the incident on the youth member's account and notify the parent/guardian via in person/phone/email about the incident and the decision to send their child home for the day.

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Incident Levels and Response Procedures:

Level 1 Incidents:

After implementing the Corrective Action steps for a Level 1 incident, the youth will be asked to leave the Y for the day. If the same behavior occurs again, resulting in a second one-day break, the youth will be required to take a one-week break (7 days). If the behavior persists, a longer period away from the Y may be necessary, depending on the situation.

Behaviors classified as Level 1 incidents include:

- Disruptive behavior that doesn't pose a threat to others or their belongings
- Name-calling
- Not following facility guidelines
- Refusing to follow staff instructions
- Using inappropriate language
- Misusing equipment or facilities
- Accessing or hanging out in unauthorized areas of the building

Level 2 Incidents:

For Level 2 incidents, the youth will be asked to leave the Y immediately for the day and will take a one-month break from the Y. An incident report will be completed by staff, and a note will be added to the youth's account. Depending on the situation, a longer break from the Y may be required.

Behaviors classified as Level 2 incidents include:

- Threatening or causing physical harm to any member, guest, or staff
- Damaging YMCA or personal property
- Stealing YMCA, member, guest, or staff property
- Allowing or helping nonmembers access the facility without staff consent

Level 3 Incidents:

For Level 3 incidents, the youth will be asked to leave the Y immediately for the day and will face a six-month break from the Y. Staff will complete an incident report, note the details in the youth's account, and inform the administrative team. Depending on the situation, a longer break may be necessary.

Behaviors classified as Level 3 incidents include:

- Harassment of any kind
- Bullying or intimidation
- Behavior that is sexually inappropriate
- Inappropriate actions related to someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or age
- Any form of severe misconduct that violates our core values

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FACILITY GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Facility Age Guidelines

- **Ages 11 and Under:** Must be accompanied by an adult at all times in the building. Parents/guardians should remain at the YMCA while children participate in programs.
- **Ages 12-17:** May be in the building independently if they scan in with a valid membership or are registered in a YGBW program running at the time of their visit.

Wellness Center and Youth Policy

Youth must be at least eight years old to use the Wellness Center. Those ages 8-14 must complete a fitness orientation before using the center and will receive a wristband to wear at all times.

- **Ages 8-11 (Orange Band)** - May use cardio equipment, resistance bands, medicine balls, stability balls, and the stretching area. Must be with a parent/guardian (18+) at all times.
- **Ages 12-14 (Purple Band)** - Can use all equipment for Orange Band members plus selectorized strength equipment (excluding cable rigs) and eGym (West Chester Area YMCA). May work out independently unless using free weights, which require a parent/guardian.
- **Ages 15 and up** - May use all areas of the Wellness Center.

Wellness Center Guidelines:

- Wipe down all machines after use.
- Be mindful of your time on each piece of equipment.
- Wear proper workout attire: shirts must be worn at all times and closed-toe shoes are required.
- Use equipment correctly. If you need assistance, ask the staff on duty.
- Do not slam or drop weights or equipment.
- Practice good personal hygiene and be considerate of others.
- Adhere to the Member Code of Conduct; fighting and foul language are not tolerated.
- Cell phone use is prohibited in the Wellness Center, Studios, and Gym.
- Return equipment to its proper place after use.
- Keep all beverages capped during workouts; glass and cans are not allowed.
- No outside food is permitted. Candy and gum are not allowed.
- Store personal items (bags, jackets, cell phones) in lockers. The YMCA of Greater Brandywine is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items.

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Water Safety Policy

To provide the safest environment possible, those 14 and under must complete a swim evaluation and will then be assigned a green, yellow or red wrist band. This band must be worn at all times in the water, as it helps our lifeguards ensure everyone's safety. A lifeguard on duty or aquatics director can perform swim evaluations. Swim bands are determined as follows:

- **Red: Non-Swimmer**
 - Has not passed any level swim test
 - Must stay in the shallow end
 - 5 years and under: Must have a parent in the water. Must wear a life jacket unless the parent is providing contact support – hands-on.
 - 6 years and older: Must wear a life jacket unless the parent is in the water within arm's reach
- **Yellow: Intermediate**
 - Can enter/exit pool independently AND swim 15 yards freestyle and tread water for 30 seconds
 - Must stay in the shallow end where they can stand confidently
 - 5 years and under: Must have a parent in the water
 - 6-11 years old: Must have a parent on side of pool supervising
 - May use the deep end with a parent in the water and a life jacket
 - 12- 14 years old without a parent must remain in the shallow end
- **Green: Proficient**
 - Can jump into deep water, tread water for one minute, float on back for 15 seconds, swim 25 yards and exit pool independently
 - 5 years and under: Must have a parent in the water if in the deep end. A parent can be poolside at shallow depths
 - 6 years and older: may swim in any section

Pool Guidelines:

- All children 14 and under are required to take a swim test and wear a wristband while at the pool.
- Appropriate clothing or swimsuit required.
- Diving is permitted in designated areas only.
- Diving blocks/boards may only be used during YMCA programming and under the supervision of trained staff.
- Glass and food are not permitted on the pool deck.
- Walk in the pool area.
- Follow the instructions of the lifeguard at all times.
- Lane sharing and circle swimming are required when there are 2 or more swimmers in a lane.
- All members and staff are to adhere to the core values of the YMCA and our member code

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MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

For the enjoyment of all, our members agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the YMCA. Based on the Y's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility, our Member Code of Conduct ensures that all that enter a YMCA of Greater Brandywine branch enjoy a safe, welcoming, comfortable and friendly environment regardless of age, race, color, religion, creed, veteran status, physical or mental ability, medical conditions, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other protected class under federal, state or local law. To view our Non Discrimination Policy: <https://www.ymcagbw.org/about/diversity-and-inclusion> We ask everyone who enters to act in a manner that upholds these principles. All individuals are expected to behave in a manner that shows respect and caring for others. This includes refraining from language or actions that could hurt or frighten another person, or behavior that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children. The YMCA is a weapon and tobacco/vapor free environment. The protection of members and guests is of paramount concern to the YMCA of Greater Brandywine. Any conduct of an inappropriate, threatening or offensive nature will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or termination of membership privileges. These include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language or any type of menacing behavior
- Sexually explicit conversation, behavior or contact with another person
- Physical contact with another person in an angry, aggressive or threatening way
- Verbally abusive behavior, swearing, name-calling or shouting
- Theft or behavior that results in damage, destruction or loss of property
- Carrying or concealing a weapon or any device or object that may be used as a weapon
- Using or possessing illegal substances, alcohol or tobacco on YMCA grounds or during programs.
- Disregard for any YMCA policy or guidelines, such as camera/cell phone policy or not following the COVID-19 YMCA safety protocols.

Appropriate attire must be worn at all times. All clothing must reflect the YMCA core values.

Swimsuits may only be worn in the pool area. Sneakers or active footwear, as well as acceptable workout attire, are required in the other areas of the facility.

The YMCA reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who has been accused or convicted of any crime including but not limited to those involving sexual abuse, is or has been a registered sex offender, has ever been convicted of any offense relating to the sale or transportation of narcotics or habit forming and/or dangerous drugs. The YMCA reserves the right to deny access to anyone who is presently or habitually under the influence of dangerous drugs or chemicals, narcotics or intoxicating beverages. Additionally, the YMCA reserves the right to deny access and membership, or revoke membership to any person using the facility or property to conduct an activity that competes with Y programs, who exhibits behavior that is a direct violation of our mission, core values, or behavior that is in conflict with the welfare and safety of others.

As a member or guest, we encourage you to be responsible for your own personal comfort and safety. Please contact the Executive Director immediately if you have any concerns.

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PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR 7TH GRADE INITIATIVE

As a parent or guardian, your support of the YMCA's 7th Grade Initiative is essential to your participant's success. By signing this acknowledgement form, you confirm that you've reviewed the program guidelines and commit to ensuring both you and your participant follow them. Please read the following statements carefully and sign to indicate your agreement and understanding

- I have received the **7th Grade Initiative Participant Handbook** and understand that it is my responsibility to follow the policies and ensure my participant understands the rules.
- I have read and understand the **7th Grade Initiative Membership Guidelines and Policies** and agree to follow them.
- I have read and understand the **Youth Conduct and Corrective Action Policy** and agree to follow it.
- I have read and understand the Facility Guidelines and Policies and agree to follow them.
- I have read and understand the **7th Grade Initiative Membership Guidelines and Policies** and agree to follow them.
- I have read and understood the **Member Code** of Conduct and agree to follow it while using YMCA facilities.
- I understand that participation may be suspended or canceled for behavior that doesn't meet program policies.
- I acknowledge there are no refunds for suspensions or terminations.
- I understand the YMCA is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal items.
- I understand that active participation and meeting all program requirements is required to maintain active youth membership.
- I understand the participant must complete the Youth Fitness Orientation within two weeks of membership activation.

By signing below, you acknowledge and agree to uphold the responsibilities and expectations outlined in this form.

Participant Name: _____ Participant Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

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7TH GRADE INITIATIVE YOUTH AGREEMENT

As a participant in the YMCA of Greater Brandywine's 7th Grade Initiative, you agree to uphold the values and responsibilities outlined in this agreement. By signing, you commit to following the program guidelines, contributing positively to our community, and committing to your own growth and success. This ensures a safe, respectful, and enriching experience for all.

○ **Youth Fitness Orientation**

I will complete the Youth Fitness Orientation, which includes training in all fitness areas by a YMCA Fitness Department team member before using them.

○ **Following Membership Guidelines**

I agree to follow all YMCA membership policies without exception as a 7th Grade Initiative member.

○ **Following Program Guidelines**

I will follow all guidelines outlined in the 7th Grade Initiative Handbook to continue benefiting from the program.

○ **Positive Participation and Respect**

I will demonstrate responsible behavior, make positive decisions, and show respect for my peers, the YMCA, and the program. I will contribute to creating a supportive and positive environment.

○ **Bully Free Zone**

I understand that any form of bullying—such as name-calling, intimidation, or derogatory language—is not tolerated. I also commit to reporting any bullying I witness to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all.

By signing below, you confirm your understanding of and agreement to follow these expectations and policies.

Participant Name: _____ Participant Grade: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

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7TH GRADE INITIATIVE FAQ

- **What is the free 7th grade membership?**
The YMCA of Greater Brandywine's 7th Grade Initiative offers seventh-grade students a complimentary youth membership during their 7th grade year.
- **Why 7th grade?**
Seventh grade is an important year in a teen's development. As students transition to middle school, they experience new opportunities and a greater sense of independence. This period of growth is when many begin to form lasting habits and values. By offering guidance and support during this time, we can help encourage positive behaviors and lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle that continues into adulthood.
- **How long is the membership effective?**
Students are eligible for a complimentary 7th grade membership starting the summer after they finish 6th grade until they complete 7th grade. This membership will remain active until August 31st of the following summer after completing 7th grade.
- **What do I need to bring to prove that the student is in 7th grade?**
You can provide a school ID, class roster, or report card to verify the student's grade level
- **What if the student is homeschooled?**
Home schooled students completing the required orientations are welcome in the program.
- **I don't have a YMCA membership. If I sign my 7th grader up for a membership, can I work out with them — will I also get a free membership?**
This free membership is only available for current 7th graders. However, we would love for family members to join the Y and enjoy the same benefits of membership. Complete [THIS](#) Membership Application and a member of our membership team will reach back with more information. Membership Rates and Categories can be found [HERE](#).
- **I have an existing membership that includes a 7th grader, do I get a discount?**
If your 7th grader is the only youth/dependent on the family membership, you can downgrade to an adult only and have the youth do the free membership.
- **I just found out about this program, can I get reimbursed for the months I have already been paying for my 7th grader?**
Any existing memberships will be adjusted at the time of enrollment into the 7th Grade Initiative. Enrollment will not be retroactive.

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JENNERSVILLE YMCA 880 West Baltimore Pike, West Grove, PA 19390 610-869-9622 KENNETT AREA YMCA 101 Race Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 610-444-9622
LIONVILLE COMMUNITY YMCA 100 Devon Drive, Exton, PA 19341 610-363-9622 OCTORARA PROGRAM CENTER 104 Highland Road, Suite 1, Atglen, PA 19310 610-593-9622
OSCAR LASKO YMCA AND CHILDCARE CENTER One East Chestnut Street, West Chester, PA 19380 610-696-9622 UPPER MAINLINE YMCA 1416 Berwyn-Paoli Road, Berwyn, PA 19312 610-647-9622
WEST CHESTER AREA YMCA 605 Airport Road, West Chester, PA 19380 610-431-9622 YMCA PICKLEBALL CENTER AT DOWNINGTOWN 901 Skelp Level Road, Downingtown, PA 19335 267-794-9622



- **If I have more than one 7th grader in my family (i.e. twins or triplets), is my family still eligible for this membership?**

Absolutely.

- **Can a 7th grader sign up for this membership on their own, or does a parent/guardian need to be present to sign and complete the 7th grade membership application?**

A parent or guardian must be present to sign and complete the 7th grade membership application. The parent/guardian will need to provide consent and assist with the registration process.

- **Is outdoor pool access included in the 7th Grade membership?**

No, outdoor pool access is not included with the 7th Grade membership. To use the outdoor pool, a parent or guardian must have an ODP membership and accompany the 7th grader. The 7th grader cannot purchase an ODP membership on their own.

- **Are there any special activities for 7th graders? What can they do at the Y?**

7th graders have access to all eight YMCA of Greater Brandywine indoor facilities, offering a wide range of activities. They can enjoy the gyms for basketball or pickleball, the swimming pool, designated areas of the fitness center*, Group Exercise classes, Enrichment Activities, and special events. Please note that some programs require advance registration, and fee-based programs offer a member discount.

**To access designated areas of the fitness center, 7th graders must complete a Youth Fitness Orientation.*