**SCHOOL AGE CARE (SAC) PROGRAM**

SAC is the bridge between early child care and middle school & teen programs. Parent involvement is a critical part of CYS Services. Youth, parents, and staff must be actively involved as partners in planning and implementing program options. We understand the stress that parents face in balancing family responsibilities and work. We also understand the stress that our youth face in today's fast moving world.

**Parent Visits and Program Communication:** Facility managers are always available to talk with parents. This is your program - it belongs to you and your children. The SAC staff is here to create the best possible support and care for your family.

**Arrival and Departure**:

* If we are transporting your child to school, he/she must arrive before vehicle departs. Afterward it becomes the parent’s responsibility to transport your child to school. Please note that breakfast ends 15 minutes before the vehicle departs.
* Coaches and instructors may sign children out and take responsibility for accountability if parent grants written permission for a stated time and period.
* Parents wishing to pick up their child from an activity center away from their site or at the school (after dismissal bell rings) must sign the child out with the site leader.

**Site Locations and Schools Served**: We transport children to and from schools that are either on post or adjacent to post.

**From the Bliss SAC Facility:** Bliss and Hughey Elementary Schools as well as Ross Middle School (AM only). **From the Logan SAC Facility:** Logan, Travis, Powell and Burnet Elementary Schools as well as Our Lady of Assumption Catholic School.

**From the Milam SAC Facility:** Milam Elementary School as well as Ross Middle School bus stop (AM only).

**What do School Age Services kids get to do?** SAC offers a variety of well-rounded daily activities for children to choose from that are safe, fun and educational. There are a wide variety of activities, clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA) and 4-H projects, field trips, presentations, life building skills and special events. Activities are planned in advance and outlined on a monthly activity calendar that families can use for home-time discussions and planning.

**Child-Directed and Staff Activities:** Child-Directed Activities are open-ended activities that children are free to choose to participate in that require little or no help from adults and staff-directed activities are scheduled activities that require some adult direction.

**Clubs:** Clubs are special interest groups that children may join which are facilitated by staff and led by children. These clubs will vary based on children’s expressed interest. SAC sites also offer in conjunction with the Texas Cooperative Extension office, a 4-H club, Boys & Girls Club with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

**Homework and Youth Technology Labs**: Within each SAC program site we have a B&GC Homework Center and a Youth Technology Lab. Staff will help children who choose to do their homework. A child may go into the Homework Center for Power Hour. SAC staff can encourage but cannot "make" children sit and complete homework, it is their choice. Children can sign-up for the Youth Technology Lab each day. A dedicated Youth Technology Lab technician has children work on projects and games together to build computer skills and social skills. Screening software is installed on all computers, software is age appropriate, and the children are monitored very closely as the computers are configured in a horseshoe.

New for 2016, the Homework lab will offer home access to a math tutoring program (Reasoning Minds) and a literacy program (Lexia CORE5), both under a two-year grant.

**Daily Schedule**: We have found that talking with the children about what they like to do and observing them, planning the activity areas based on child preferences and developmental levels and maintaining a variety of activities is one of the secrets to a successful program. The other critical element is respecting children's freedom and choice. Children do not have to ask to move around the building, they are not directed by an adult to participate in projects or activities.

Mornings: An organized staff-directed activity is scheduled every morning. Breakfast is provided buffet style from 0630-0730. Afternoons: Children report to their designated pick up point as soon as school is dismissed. Attendance is taken and any child who is absent is followed up on. The first hour (1530-1630) of the after school program provides nutritious snacks buffet style and outdoor/gym play is available. From 1600-1730 all areas are open. From 1730-1800 areas of choice are gradually reduced and cleaned up as the numbers of youth are picked up.

Four Service Areas Used for Program Planning: 1-Sports and Fitness; 2-Leisure and Recreation; 3-Life Skills, Citizenship and Leadership; 4-Mentoring, Intervention and Support Services

**Dress Policy**: Children should arrive clean and dressed in comfortable play clothes. All items of clothing should be labeled with the child's name. Clothing designating gang affiliation or clothing with inappropriate pictures or writing will not be allowed. Comfortable shoes with socks are required. Activities that require calf socks to participate are roller skating, ice skating and bowling. Tennis shoes are appropriate and safe for indoor and outside play. Children should come dressed for the weather. Swimming attire should be conservative and appropriate when being worn for indoor/outdoor swimming. Shower shoes, flip-flops, or sandals are acceptable for the swimming pool. If camp shirts have been issued, please wear them on field trip days.

**Personal Items**: Children will be assigned a locker and any personal items should be stored there. Clearly marking your child’s items will help us to return misplaced items back to their rightful owners. Extra money and personal toys are not permitted as your fees cover everything your child will need while in our care.

Spending money is a life skill better left to parents and can cause hurt feelings with the have-nots. SAC is not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.

**Electronics and Cell Phones**: There is not a need for children to have/use their personal cell phones or other electronic devices while they are here in a safe environment in the care of the SAC staff. If children wish to talk with their parents or parents want to talk with their children, SAC has phones available. Our field trip leaders carry government issued cell phones on all outings for emergencies.

**Parent Conferences:** Will be scheduled on an as needed basis by either the facility managers or you. There may be times when children's behavior becomes a threat to themselves, other children or staff. We pledge to keep parents informed of difficult situations as they progress, not just give you bad news all at once. We want to address problems from the beginning and gain your support at home to correct the situation. If we can correct a minor situation or problem here at the program on the spot you may never

hear about it. But if problems persist we will ask for a conference and your help to develop a plan of action.

Some children may require more than routine or basic care. This may include children with or children who are at risk of disabilities, chronic illnesses and physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions. Children with special needs are accommodated through a process that includes an Inclusion Action Team (IAT) and Military Service specific IAT protocol. The IAT process supports reasonable accommodation by considering the needs of the child, the child care environment, staffing and training requirements, and the resources of the program. We welcome the opportunity to discuss each family's needs.