

Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell Parent/ Guardian Information Packet



Mission: Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Through creative programs in a safe and nurturing environment, we strive to teach the independence and personal responsibility girls need to succeed.

Purpose: The purpose of the program at Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell is to prepare girls for responsible and confident adulthood, economic independence, and personal fulfillment.

Philosophy of the Child Care Program: To provide a safe, supportive, and caring environment for girls during after school hours and school vacations.

Goals: To provide quality care that benefits each girl physically, emotionally, and educationally by:

- Increasing self-awareness, confidence, and feelings of self-esteem.
- Developing increased social skills through interaction with peers.
- Providing adult supervision by caring, supportive staff who understand the girls' needs, challenge them to excel, and maintain high expectations for their future accomplishments.

Description of Program: Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell offers an afterschool program for girls ages 5-18 living in the Greater Lowell area. There are also summer and vacation programs. Activities that are provided include sports, crafts, computer skills, cooking, health education, science, math, literacy, special speakers, events, and field trips. Girls Inc. is a licensed Large Group and School Age Child Care Program and accepts Child Care Vouchers.

The Department of Early Education and Care is our Licensing Authority.

Parents or guardians may contact EEC with any questions or concerns.

51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
Main Line: (617)988-6600
Fax: (617)988-2451

Non-Discrimination Policy: Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious affiliation, cultural heritage, handicap status, sexual orientation, political

beliefs, age, sex, marital status or national origin in hiring procedures and/or in providing services.

Schedule: The afterschool program is scheduled Monday through Friday from 2:00pm to 6:00pm during the school year. A full day schedule (7:30/ 8:30 am to 6:00pm) is offered during vacation weeks in December, February and April and summer program hours are 7:30/ 8:30 am to 5:30/ 6:00 pm.

Girls Incorporated facilities are typically closed on the following holidays (varies by year):

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr.	Thanksgiving Day
Presidents Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Juneteenth	Christmas Day
Independence Day	

The center is open on Lowell Public School half days and early release days. Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell is closed when school in Lowell is cancelled due to dangerous weather conditions. Girls Inc. may also close programs for a day of staff training (staff development days will be announced at least two months in advance).

Food: Girls Incorporated provides an afternoon snack each day. We encourage healthy food options during program such as fruit, vegetables whole grain crackers, and dairy (i.e., cheese, yogurt). We ask parents and guardians to provide well-balanced meals when possible. Candy, soda, and fast-food are not permitted in program areas.

*Note: Girls who attend the full vacation week programs must provide their own lunch. Please **DO NOT** send food that needs microwaved or warmed up. EEC guidelines do not allow for the warming up of food.

Transportation: Girls Incorporated offers transportation from school to our center, when permitted by a licensing agent. This service is included for licensed childcare as dictated by each family's childcare voucher. Transportation is offered to other members for a monthly fee. We are responsible for the children we pick up from the time they get into our vehicles until the time they sign out at the end of the day. We are not responsible for any members who take other transportation or walk to our program until the moment they walk into the building and sign in. Transportation is limited and awarded on a 1st come, 1st serve basis.

Transportation is provided by Girls Incorporated for small group field trips, and commercial bus rental is arranged by us for large group field trips. In the event of a vehicle breakdown or other emergency, the driver will phone the Girls Incorporated facility and alternate transportation will be sent.

For parents who would like their daughters to walk home at the end of the program day, it is required that they sign a permission slip for this purpose. For those walking home, our responsibility ends once they sign out.

During the school vacation program and the summer program, parents are responsible for morning drop-off and afternoon pickup. If parents are repeatedly late in picking up a child, Girls Inc. reserves the right to terminate service.

Release Policy: Children may be released only to the individuals listed in the “release to” section of the membership form. Please call us (or send a note with a phone number where you can be reached) in advance if anyone else will be picking up your child. (Also, please make sure that the person picking up your child can furnish us with adequate proof of identity (i.e., driver’s license)).

Attendance: Parents of girls in licensed childcare and of girls using Girls Incorporated transportation must call our office at 978-458-6529 before 12:00pm if their child will not be attending that day. We ask that parents/guardians please notify Girls Incorporated if your child will be absent for the day or an extended period of time. If after three days of your child being absent, without notice to a Girls Inc staff member, the Business and Membership Manager will reach out via a call/email. If unable to reach and after two weeks of no attendance your child’s membership will be terminated, this includes a notification to Child Care Circuit, if applicable to you.

Emergency Health Care: First Aid will be administered on site by a qualified person. If further treatment is necessary, parents will be notified, and transportation will be secured to an emergency care facility. A copy of our Health Care Policy is available upon request.

Medication: If a child is to take medication while in the program, the parent must complete the Health Information Form and an Individual Health Care Plan Form/ Medication Consent Form. The parent or guardian must complete these forms giving authorization and be signed and approved by a licensed Health Care Practitioner, prior to the first day of attendance. Medication must be an original prescription from the prescribing doctor and an original bottle from the pharmacy will need to be submitted to the Agency. This container must specify the recipient, dosage, and schedule. A record will be kept of all medication given.

Infectious Illness Exclusion Policy:

Girls Incorporated follows the same illness exclusion guidelines as the Lowell public schools; if the child is ill such that she could not attend school, then she should not attend Girls Incorporated. Girls will be excluded from after school childcare for suspicion of a communicable disease until successful treatment has been started or a physician states that the child may return. Both the Department of Public Health and the parents will be notified of any contagious disease.

Members who have contracted lice are required to be treated before returning to the program, as lice spreads quickly and creates a health concern. If a member is found with lice during program hours, a parent will be notified by phone call and asked to pick their child up from the program immediately to prevent the spread of lice.

Toileting Policy:

Members enrolled in the Girls Inc. After School Program are required to toilet independently. Independent toileting is defined as wearing underwear with very few accidents. A child having daily accidents or wearing pull-ups would not be independently toileting unless there was a verified medical reason for the accidents.

Girls Inc. recognizes that even potty-trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. By definition, “accidents” are unusual incidents and occur infrequently. In these instances, a coordinator will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. Girls Inc. encourages all children ages 5-6 to bring a spare change of clothing in their backpacks daily, or to store an extra change of clothing, on-site.

An independently toileting child can do the following:

1. Communicate to adults that she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go.
2. Alert herself to stop what she is doing, to go and use the restroom.
3. Pull her clothes down and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe herself after using the toilet.
5. Get on/off the toilet, independently.
6. Wash and dry hands.
7. Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the restroom to finish.

Girls Inc. understands that each child arrives at this milestone differently. We will allow four weeks from the first day of enrollment for members to demonstrate accomplishment of independent toileting. However, Girls Inc. staff are not trained, and the program is not licensed for assisted toileting, and if the situation becomes unmanageable within the program environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

Administrative Organization of the Program:

Ashley Filipp, Executive Director	Responsible for overall operation of the program and supervision of all full-time employees.
Meredith Munoz, Program Director	Responsible for operations/scheduling of programs and supervision of program staff.
TBD, Program Manager	Responsible for daily activities, supervision of program staff, and working directly with children and their families.

Kiara Veras, Business/Membership Director	Responsible for business/financial aspects of daily operations, maintenance of facility, attendance records.
Cathleen Gable, Development Director	Responsible for researching and writing grants, communicating with donors to increase giving to the annual fund, and helping to organize fundraising events.
Program Specialists	Responsible for planning and implementing daily activities with the children.

Staffing: For classes age 5 to 14, Girls Inc. will maintain a leader-to-girl ratio of no more than 1:13.

Parental Involvement, Site Visits and Grievances: We believe that parental involvement is vital to the success of any childcare program. Therefore, our staff will be available for parent conferences to discuss ideas, suggestions, problems, and/or the child's progress.

If a parent has a specific concern or complaint about the program or staff, she/he must speak to the Program Director or Program Coordinator. Parents are also invited to visit and observe the program at any time. If you wish to meet with a staff member, please call our office to arrange for a mutually convenient time. The Program Coordinators/ Supervisors will respond to all parent and member concerns. The first step in our grievance process is to bring the grievance to the party with whom there is a disagreement.

The escalation of grievances is as follows:

Step 1. The member/ parent or guardian meets with the staff with whom they have the concern within five program days of the incident. This conversation should be an *informal* attempt on the part of the member to resolve the issue in an efficient manner. Following the conversation, both parties should document the facts and possible outcome for their own onsite records. If the member or their parent/ guardian is not satisfied that the concern has been resolved, she may move to Step 2.

Step 2. The member/ parent or guardian meets with the staff's supervisor to present the grievance within five program days of the meeting with the employee to resolve the issue. Following this additional informal conversation, all parties should document the facts and possible outcome for their own onsite records. If the issue is not resolved at this step, the supervisor provides information about the *formal* grievance procedure to the member or their parent/ guardian, which begins with Step 3.

Step 3. The member/ parent or guardian submits the formal grievance to the Executive Director in writing within five program days from the meeting with the supervisor. If the member feels that the conversation with the staff and the supervisor did not satisfy the issue in question, she should initiate the formal grievance procedure.

If a member/ parent or guardian is not comfortable following the 3-Step process above, they can at any given time, bring the grievance directly to the Executive Director.

Records: Children’s records are kept confidential. Parents may have access to and copies of their child’s record upon request.

Referral Procedure:

If, after observation and communication among the staff, any child shows signs of a need to be referred to an agency offering social or mental health services, or educational or medical assistance, the staff will set up an appointment with the child’s parent(s) to discuss the problem and make a referral. Staff will keep a written record of incidents/concerns for the child’s file, for use in making appropriate referrals, and will provide the parent(s) with a copy of these records. The results of the staff-parent meeting will be recorded. Parents and staff will also have access to a referral list of community resources maintained by Girls Inc. (available upon request). Below are details regarding the types of behavior (Part A) and specific processes for making referrals (Part B).

Part A: Types of Behavior

- A pattern* of aggression/violence towards self, staff, and/or peers
- Disclosure of self-harming impulses or suicidal ideation
- A pattern of non-compliance that results in safety concerns.
- Behaviors typical of sensory processing difficulty
- Behaviors typical of PDD Spectrum Disorders
- Observation of physical limitations
- Observation of academic limitations

** A pattern is determined after three similar incidents occur within a 30-day time span.*

Part B: Referral Details

For a pattern of aggression/violence: Incidents will be documented following the Girls Inc. Disciplinary Policy. A parent or guardian will be notified in person and in writing of the initial incident and each subsequent incident, as well as any disciplinary measures. If three incidents occur in the given time frame a Girls Inc. Administrator will offer to make a referral, that includes documentation of each incident and a written letter of non-clinical observations. The referral can be made to the child’s primary care doctor, the child’s school, or a professional of the parent/guardian’s choice.

For disclosure of self-harming impulses or suicidal ideation: The disclosure will be documented with the EEC’s customary Incident Report. A parent or guardian will be notified in person and in writing of the initial incident and each subsequent incident. After each notification, the parent will be given the option to receive a referral that includes a copy of the original incident report

and a written letter of non-clinical observations. The referral can be made to the child's primary care doctor, a mental health professional, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice. Girls Incorporated reserves the right to notify the Department of Children and Family Services of self-harming and suicidal ideation.

A pattern of non-compliance that results in safety concerns: Girls Inc. defines non-compliance as the inability to follow simple directives (i.e., the direction to sit in a chair), without cause or reason. When members cannot meet simple safety guidelines it jeopardizes the safety everyone. As such, if non-compliance becomes an observable pattern a supervisor will notify a parent/guardian verbally and in writing. The initial notification will include copies of any disciplinary notices or incident reports that document the pattern, and a daily log of non-compliance will be kept and reviewed weekly with the parent. After thirty days, if common behavioral intervention techniques and accommodations have proven ineffective a supervisor will offer to make a referral including all documentation kept and a written letter of non-clinical observations. The referral can be made to the child's primary care doctor, a mental health professional, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice.

Behaviors typical of sensory processing difficulty: Behaviors that could indicate a sensory processing difficulty can include: the need touch others, even when it is inappropriate, uncoordinated movements, uncontrolled fidgeting, extreme distraction, a tendency to accidentally harm peers when playing, avoidance of large groups, overreaction to noise, and "thrill-seeking". If a pattern of these types of behaviors are observed a parent/guardian will be notified verbally and in writing. At the time of the notification any documentation, including disciplinary notices and incident reports that detail the behavior will be provided. A supervisor will offer to make a referral to the child's primary care doctor, a mental health professional, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice. The referral will include all documentation of the behavior and a written letter of non-clinical observations.

Behavior typical of PDD Spectrum Disorders: Behaviors that could indicate PDD Spectrum Disorders are developmental delays, difficulty understanding common social cues, deficits in verbal communication, atypical socialization, and difficulty with transitions. If a pattern of these types of behaviors are observed a parent/guardian will be notified verbally and in writing. At the time of the notification any documentation, including disciplinary notices and incident reports that detail the behavior will be provided. A supervisor will offer to make a referral to the child's primary care doctor, a mental health professional, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice. The referral will include all documentation of the behavior and a written letter of non-clinical observations.

Observation of physical limitations: Physical limitation are defined as the inability to perform age-appropriate physical tasks (i.e., running, throwing, kicking, etc.) If a noticeable deficit in physical performance is observed over a period of time a daily log will be kept to identify and

record the limitations. A parent/guardian will be informed of the observations verbally and in writing and the log will be available for their review. At the time of the initial notification, an administrator will offer to make a referral that includes a written letter of non-clinical observations, as well as any documentation kept regarding the limitation. The referral can be made to the child's primary care doctor, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice.

Observation of academic limitations: Academic limitations are defined as the inability to meet age-appropriate expectations regarding intellectual performance (i.e., the inability to identify letters/numbers, inability to comprehend verbal/written information, inability to count, etc.). If a noticeable deficit in academic performance is observed over a period of time a parent/guardian will be informed of the observations verbally and in writing. At the time of the initial notification, an administrator will offer to make a referral that includes a written letter of non-clinical observations, as well as any documentation kept regarding the limitation. The referral can be made to the child's primary care doctor, the child's school, or a professional of the parent/guardian's choice.

**Girls Inc. will provide a list of relevant community resources to parents/guardians, upon request, to assist with the referral process.*

Registration Procedures:

FOR VDC (VOUCHER) CLIENTS: After being referred to Girls Inc. By ChildCare Circuit, or any other voucher designated agency, the parent/guardian must complete the enrollment packet. Once completed it can be submitted to the Business Office for review. After review, the Director of Finance will contact the parent/guardian to confirm payment arrangements and a start date. An orientation visit and tour are available upon request.

FOR PRIVATE PAY CLIENTS: The parent/guardian must complete the enrollment packet. Once completed it can be submitted to the Business Office for review. After review, the Director of Finance will contact the parent/guardian to confirm payment arrangements and a start date. An orientation visit and tour are available upon request.

Girls Inc. has a limited number of spots available to maintain our licensed ratio. New members (voucher and private pay) will be added to the waitlist, if necessary. When space becomes available, the parent/guardian will be notified.

Fee, Attendance, & Payment Protocols

Girls Inc. Of Greater Lowell is a small, private non-profit organization. Its budget funding is derived from fees for service and private donations. Childcare fees need to be paid as agreed so Girls Inc. maintains an operating budget for its school-age childcare center. Parents are responsible for weekly fees regardless of their child's attendance for that week. Under the circumstance of Girls Inc. Of Greater Lowell being closed, childcare fees will not be charged for the duration of closure.

Private Pay Client Fees

Invoices will be distributed weekly on Fridays, either by email or in-person at the door, depending on the billing preference selected in the enrollment paperwork. Payments are due by the following Wednesday. Payments can be made on-site, in the business office, by cash, credit cards, or check. Payments can also be made online at www.girlsinclowell.org, under the 'Program Payments' tab. At the time of enrollment one-week's payment is due, as a down payment.

Unpaid fees will be subject to a \$5.00 late fee for each day the fees are late. After 10 days your child's membership will be suspended until all outstanding balances are paid. After 30 days of suspension and non-payment your child's membership will be terminated and her spot will be awarded to a child from the waiting list. Any outstanding balances are subject to be sold to collections, after 90-days, at the discretion of the Executive Director. Any member with outstanding balances will not be granted enrolment in a different program. For example, a member who has outstanding After-School Program fees will not be granted enrollment in the Summer Program until the outstanding fees are paid.

VDC (Voucher) Client Fees

Daily fees are determined by ChildCare Circuit and cannot be negotiated with Girls Inc., additionally, Girls Inc. cannot grant discounts on these fees. Invoices will be distributed weekly on Fridays, either by email or in-person at the door, depending on the billing preference selected in the enrollment paperwork. Payments are due by the following Wednesday. Payments can be made on-site, in the business office, by cash, credit cards, or check. Payments can also be made online at www.girlsinclowell.org, under the 'Program Payments' tab. At the time of enrollment one-week's payment is due, as a down payment.

If an account is outstanding for more than two-weeks, Girls Inc. is legally obligated to notify ChildCare Circuit and will do so. This could impact a family's voucher status. After 30-days of non-payment Girls Inc. will notify ChildCare Circuit that membership has been suspended for non-payment. After 60-days of non-payment Girls Inc. will request to terminate the membership and the spot will be filled.

Late Payments

Girls Inc. Understands that emergencies arise. Families who are unable to make full payment should contact the Director of Finance, immediately, to discuss an acceptable payment arrangement. We cannot provide childcare services for families that fail to pay tuition fees, however, we prefer to work with families to reach a manageable repayment plan, instead of terminating membership. Please stop by our business office if you are experiencing hardship and would like to make alternative arrangements. Financial hardship will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and repayment plans will be arranged at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Late Pick Up Charges

All parents must make arrangements for their child(ren) to be picked up by 6:00 pm, as we do not provide any transportation home. The following late fee policy has been established to ensure parents comply with this pickup time.

- A \$5.00 charge for the first 15-minute delay or part thereof.
- A \$10.00 charge for the second 15-minute delay or part thereof.

A staff member will remain with the child until a family member or other authorized pick-up person arrives. A staff member will call the parents listed phone number at 6:10 if a child is still in the building. In the event that the parent doesn't pick up or arrive by 6:20, a staff member will begin to call the emergency contacts. After 6:30, the Executive Director will be notified of the late pick-up. Further action could include notifying the Lowell Police of a child abandonment.

A pattern of late pick-ups could result in the termination of membership for private pay clients. For VDC (voucher) clients a pattern of late pick-up will be reported to ChildCare Circuit and could affect the voucher status.

We strongly recommend that if you are running late due to traffic or an emergency you call Girls Inc. and notify the office that you are running late.

Prevention of Abuse and/or Neglect: All staff members shall report suspected incidents of abuse and/or neglect to the Site Coordinator. The Site Coordinator will report to the Department of Children and Families and file 51A and notify the Early Education and Care office. Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and/or neglect.

Phone Use Policy: As stated in the After-School Program's rules and regulations, girls may only make phone calls for emergency reasons (as in the case of illness). All phone calls must be made with a staff member's permission.

Girls Inc.'s Phone Use Policy is intended to keep members safe while in the building. Staff cannot monitor each individual member's cell phone usage, and as such, cannot guarantee that members are using their phones safely and appropriately. Without this guarantee, children could be engaging with unsafe strangers through social media platforms and/or participating or being victims of cyber bullying. The safety of members is the priority for Girls Inc., and we ask for parental support in this matter, as we cannot be held responsible for the behavior of members online. If you must contact your daughter during program hours, we recommend calling the Girls Inc. Office to limit the need for personal phones during program hours.

Internet Use Policy:

Availability of Internet Access

Girls Inc. has a limited number of computers available, which are mainly reserved for homework use and specific computer programming. If a member requires the use of a computer, the request must be made to the Program Coordinator by a parent/guardian. Many members use online learning software (like iReady). Because there are so few computers on-site, we cannot accommodate the use of computers for regular daily homework, except in extenuating circumstances (i.e., a member does not have internet access at home, a teacher has requested that a child receive additional support, etc.). The determination regarding computer usage for academic purposes will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Program Coordinator. Additionally, members will only have computer access when staff are available to supervise their internet activity.

Disclaimer Notice

During computer access times, Girls Inc. staff and/or volunteers are on hand to help with girls' questions and generally oversee computer use. However, the girls operate the individual workstations themselves, and ultimately Girls Inc. has no control over the availability of websites, which sites will post, or the content of information – text or images – that is retrieved from the Internet. This information could contain content that Girls Inc., the child, or parent may consider objectionable or inappropriate for the child to be viewing.

Girls and their parents should be aware that the Internet may contain inaccurate and incomplete information, and that the Internet may contain information that may not be suitable for children, such as controversial or sexually explicit material that some may find offensive or inappropriate.

Members are responsible and accountable for following all rules and policies when using Girls Inc. computers. It should also be noted that Girls Inc. staff or designated volunteer instructors may review files and communications to ensure that members are using the network and equipment properly. Members and parents should not expect that information stored or displayed on Girls Inc. machines will be private.

Girls Inc. will not provide e-mail accounts or access to members unless as part of a specific exchange program with another agency. Members who have personal e-mail accounts from another source may access those accounts from Girls Inc. computers only with prior parent/guardian permission.

Internet Safety Instruction

Girls Inc. will offer introductory instruction for all members on appropriate use of the Internet and related safety practices. The instruction will cover Girls Inc.'s policies as well as offer examples of useful and age-appropriate online resources for the girls to consider accessing.

Parents are strongly encouraged to stay in touch with their child's online activities --discuss what is being seen or done online and, when possible, explore the web together.

Internet Use Rules and Regulations

1. The following uses of Girls Inc. computers and Internet access are prohibited:
 - a. Accessing or transmitting any material which is deemed unlawful, obscene, sexually explicit, or otherwise inappropriate for children.
 - b. Using the Internet in any other illegal manner (harassing others, hacking, releasing viruses, etc.)
 - c. Altering or damaging Girls Inc. software, hardware, or data
 - d. Unauthorized software installation
 - e. Accessing (or attempting to access) unauthorized files, passwords, etc.
 - f. Copyright infringement
 - g. Providing Internet access to an unauthorized user
 - h. Unauthorized downloading or copying of information or software.
 - i. Using the Internet in ways not authorized by parent/guardian.
 - j. Not complying with instructions given by Girls Inc. staff/volunteers

Violations of Policy

Any violation of Girls Inc.'s rules and policies regarding Internet use, as well as other program rules, and applicable government laws shall be reviewed individually by case. Any violations of these rules and policies may result in the loss of Internet and other computer privileges.

After School Program Overview

The After-School Program is open Monday through Friday from 2:00pm-6:00pm when school is in session. Girls Inc. follows the Lowell Public Schools (LPS) yearly calendar, with the program opening early on LPS scheduled half days and closing on state/ city weather related emergency days.

Each day after sign-in, members choose a hands-on educational activity. Participants have the opportunity to choose activities in areas such as science, cooking, art, health, sports, photography, theater, and homework help. We also offer specialty classes at no extra cost, as well as guest speakers, field trips and civic engagement service projects.

Girls Inc. runs one-hour long programs or classes each day from 2:30-5:30. In between activities, staff make announcements on upcoming events and new classes.

After members select their age-appropriate class or program, girls are escorted by their group leader/educator to their activity rooms. Hall passes are utilized when members are using the facilities or need to communicate with a supervisor.

In emergency behavioral or injury situations, an educator can call an administrator or send a mature member from the activity with the incident to recruit an on-site supervisor to manage the situation one-on-one. The child with unsafe behavior or injury will be escorted to a supervisor's office to be attended to by supervisors. Members also have the privilege of "taking space" in a supervisor's office with permission from their educator if the member feels they need to self-discipline and remove themselves from others or want to discuss a matter with a supervisor.

School Vacation Program Overview

Girls Incorporated offers a full day program when school is not in session. The program is open from 7:30 (early drop-off for additional charge)/8:30am to 5:30pm. For program cost please refer/request a current Program Fee Schedule. Activities include local field trips, computer time, arts and crafts, cooking, swimming, games, and gym activities.

Summer Vacation Program Overview:

- **Summer Hours** are 8:30-5:30. Early drop off is available at 7:30, costs \$5 daily, and payment needs to be made a week in advance. Your daughter must be picked up by 5:30. Any time after that will result in a late fee. Please be sure to give Girls Inc. a courtesy call if you are running late.
- **Program Specialists** are all trained and certified in child development, conflict resolution, program planning and implementation, group management, and CPR and First Aid.
- **Weekly Schedule:** Program Specialists plan hands-on and intentional programs that fit with the theme of the week. Along with these programs the girls will have group time activities and mini field trips to local businesses, organizations and museums that are within walking distance of our facility. We will provide weekly schedules for the summer that will be printed and placed in the lobby the Friday prior to the new week. The schedules include the week's theme, full day fieldtrips, mini fieldtrips, and reminders on what the girls need to bring. Girls should bring a bathing suit, extra pair of underwear, towel, sun block, and water bottle daily.
- **Pool:** Dates and times for pool will be made available closer to the summer program. There are always certified lifeguards watching the girls at all times as well as supervision by our summer program specialists who are all trained in both CPR and first aid. Pool time may be cancelled due to weather conditions for the girls' safety. In order to ensure the girls' wellbeing at the pool, we require the girls to stay in the shallow end at all times unless they have passed a swim test administered by a certified lifeguard.
- **Lunch** will be provided most days of the summer by the Lowell Healthy Summer Program. The schedule is created by them and specific dates will be available closer to summer. Their lunch

menu will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. If your daughter has a food allergy or does not like the menu provided, please pack a bagged lunch. We cannot prepare any microwave meals.

- **Field Trips: Once** a week the girls are out of the building on full day fieldtrips. A full list of the field trips and their dates will be available and posted in the lobby. On field trip days the bus will leave promptly at the beginning of program hours and return at the end of the day. There will be days the bus will leave earlier. Please check the weekly schedule in the lobby for these details. If your daughter is unable to be dropped off at this time or needs to be picked up early, please find alternative childcare that day. Please provide your daughter with a bagged lunch on field trip days, a water bottle, bug spray, and sun block. The girls should wear their sneakers and their Girls Inc. shirts. You can purchase a t-shirt through a Girls Inc. staff member or during store hours for only \$12. Due to weather conditions, outdoor field trips may be cancelled. Staff will make alternative plans for activities at Girls Incorporated.
- Flip flops are not allowed during summer programming. Girls are required to wear close-toed shoes. Flip flops pose a serious safety issue, so we appreciate your cooperation enforcing this rule with your daughter(s).
- **Health:** If your daughter has any health issues that require her to have medication at any time (including inhalers and over the counter medications), please provide us with a doctor's note and medication with a pharmacy label.

Member Responsibilities:

- All girls must sign in at the desk near the front door when they arrive. Girls may only sign in for themselves, not for other members. Parents or designated adults must sign girls out at pickup.
- When the girls arrive, they should hang their coats on hangers and their bags on hooks. Belongings can also be put in plastic baskets (as requested). All belongings should be labeled in permanent marker with your daughter's name (first and last). This will help in identifying lost/misplaced items. Girls are responsible for their own belongings. The Lost & Found is cleaned out periodically. Any unlabeled belongings will be given to a local charity or thrown out. Girls Inc. does not take responsibility for missing or damaged items.
- Girls are expected to help clean up the center as needed. Tasks include cleaning the snack area, washing the snack dishes, picking up stray papers, etc. Please encourage your daughters to take pride in the appearance of our center and to pick up after themselves. If they are in the process of playing a game or doing a project, they are expected to pick up and put away what they are using before they leave.
- Girls are not allowed to make phone calls unless they obtain special permission from Girls Inc. staff or a note from their parent. Girls may not call for non-emergency reasons, such as forgetting a bathing suit or not knowing who will pick them up.
- Every girl must go to a class or "choice" during activity time. Girls must remain in the supervised activity area until escorted back to the game room with their group.
- Music: we encourage the girls to share and listen to a variety of music and musical styles, and we want them to be able to enjoy music that they like while in our program. However, we cannot allow music with lyrics that are inappropriate for a childcare setting. Unfortunately, this means we must restrict listening to radio stations that play explicit lyrics during our program hours. We also ask that you please check any music that your daughter might want to bring in and make sure it is appropriate for children. Thank you for your help.
- Members are expected to be RESPECTFUL of the staff, the property, and other members of Girls Incorporated. In addition, there are certain rules that the girls need to follow on a daily basis. The following are not allowed:

Fighting/Hitting

Taking off Shoes

Gum Chewing

Eating/Drinking on Carpeted Areas

Sitting on Tables or Counters

Leaving Program Areas Without Permission

Swearing/Rude Language

Running

Carrying Other Children

Brushing Hair/Sharing Brushes

Applying Nail Polish

If members do not follow these rules or if they behave in ways which a staff member feels are unsafe, troublesome, or disrespectful, disciplinary action will result. The most common consequence is for the girl(s) involved to complete a “Think-It-Through” activity sheet. They may be asked to write down solutions to the problem or how they could behave differently next time. If these approaches do not work, or if the behavior is threatening to other people and the program, a “warning slip” may be written to inform the parent of the problem. Warning slips must be signed by the parent and returned the next day.

Repeated issues involving disrespect or misbehavior may result in one or more of the following:

- Losing privilege of participating in special classes and field trips
- A conference with the parent/guardian to discuss a plan for improvement
- Taking time off from attending the After-School Program

Extreme behavior cases involving violence, stealing, or destruction of property may result in an immediate suspension or permanent removal from the program.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Please encourage your child to participate in activities, to try new things, and to make new friends. Review the rules with her and help us reinforce the importance of respecting herself, others, and property.
- Stay “in touch” with what your child is doing during her time at Girls Inc. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to talk to a staff member. You can speak with us when you pick up your child, or you can call any time during business hours.
- Parents are expected to check their daughters’ heads periodically for signs of head lice. The Lowell public schools also conduct periodic checks for all students. Girls Incorporated or your child’s school nurse can provide you with information about lice prevention and treatment. Unfortunately, we do not have a nurse on staff to conduct head checks. If we do notice a problem or if the child complains of an itchy head, however, we will check and call the parent to pick up the child if treatment is needed.
- As a safety precaution, we do NOT allow children to wait at the door and leave when they see their parent/guardian arrive. Therefore, it is necessary for the adult to come into the building. In addition, we require all release people to sign the sign-out sheet before they leave the building.

- Special announcements and information for parents will be posted on the monitor in the front lobby and hallway. Letters and flyers will be passed out at the sign-out desk during pick-up time. Please check these locations regularly.