

## READ AfterSchool, Inc. Program Handbook

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### **Mission and Philosophy**

Our mission is to be the premier provider of out of school care in the communities we serve, offering high quality programs with recreational and educational activities. We hire passionate, highly qualified people who share our values:

- *Academic Excellence:* We support the goals of each student's classroom teacher through homework support and out-of-school independent reading.
- *Educational Enrichment:* We provide enriching activities to stimulate curious minds.
- *Recreation:* We believe physical activity is important to a healthy lifestyle and to academic success, and provide invigorating recreational activities and free play.
- *Nutrition:* We feed healthy minds and bodies while embracing healthy snack guidelines.
- *Safety:* We put the safety and supervision of our students at top-of-mind at all times.
- *Fun:* We are where kids want to be!

Our staff is committed to:

- Providing a caring, challenging, and stimulating environment
- Complementing academic goals in the classroom through enriching activities
- Creating a sense of community for every student
- Teaching each child how to interact with others while developing good sportsmanship and leadership qualities
- Providing children with safe, fun, goal-oriented standards-based recreational activities

READ AfterSchool offers students the opportunity to be involved in a variety of recreational and academic enrichment activities, while parents are secure in the knowledge that their children have caring supervision.

### **After School Program**

**General Activities:** Elementary school students meet at 1:55 p.m. under normal conditions. On Early Release days, students meet at 12:55.

Students are assigned to groups based on age. An attempt is made to keep friends together, but we reserve the right to assign groups as necessary. Groups rotate to different activity areas that include recreation, homework, and academically enriching activities. Friday “Fun Days” may include outdoor recreation and an indoor movie and games. The weather, as well as student needs and preferences, are considered when planning the day’s activities.

It is important that you and your student discuss the need to stay with the group and have the instructor know the child’s whereabouts at all times.

**Play Areas:** There are a variety of play areas at READ AfterSchool. They have been designed with different age groups and developmental levels in mind.

We make every effort to rotate each group through as many different areas as possible during the course of the week.

**Study Hall:** READ AfterSchool places strong emphasis on providing our students with a comfortable, supervised area to do their homework, reading, and studying. With today’s fast-paced lifestyle, we understand that many families don’t always have time in the evenings to devote to homework and studying, and value the opportunity to enjoy family time. We encourage children to utilize the time and assistance available at READ AfterSchool and to complete any work or studying during their time here.

We realize that some children require firm boundaries when it comes to homework. If your student does not complete their assigned homework during the homework period, your student will continue working on homework in Study Hall instead of progressing to group activities, unless otherwise requested by a parent or guardian.

### **Operating Procedures**

**Parking:** Parking can be found at the South Tampa Fellowship Church. If you are picking up your student prior to 3:15 p.m. at the school, please park in the rear of the building and enter through the gated entrance to the covered court . On most days, students will be in the playground in the front of the school from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Parents may park on the street adjacent to the playground for short periods of time during pickup.

**Sign Out and Authorization for Pickup:** Each parent, guardian, and authorized pickup must have their own PIN. This PIN will be used to electronically sign out each student upon pickup. Florida laws governing childcare require us to keep a permanent record of children being signed in and out of the facility. You may also elect to utilize the Parent App, [Insite Connect](#), to sign out your student using a QR code on your mobile device. Please see READ AfterSchool staff upon pickup to sign out your student(s). READ AfterSchool uses the [Remind](#) text alert system and will notify families when students have relocated from one play area / workspace to another.

At the time of registration, a PIN is generated for each parent/guardian, and for your emergency contact. Please note that anyone whom you specify as an emergency contact is automatically considered an authorized pickup. To add one or more individuals to your authorized pickup list, log into the [Parent Portal](#), click on the Personal tab, then Add New Contact. A PIN will be automatically generated for your newly-added contact; be sure to provide each contact with their unique PIN. The PIN is just like a signature and should not be shared.

**School Closings:** READ AfterSchool will be closed on any day that Hillsborough County Public Schools are closed for inclement weather.

In the event of severe weather, please plan to pick up your child as soon as possible. These threats include hurricane warnings, tornado warnings and severe thunderstorm warnings. READ AfterSchool uses the [Remind](#) text alert system and will notify families of severe weather situations.

If you are unable to pick up your child during these conditions, please have a backup plan. Please call READ AfterSchool staff at (813) 334-0872 as early as possible and inform us of any new persons that are authorized for pickup.

**Personal Items:** Students are responsible for their own items. Each student's clothes should be marked with his/her name or initials. Each child is provided space for backpacks, lunchboxes, and sports bags. These areas are cleared at the end of each day. Anything left at the end of the day is placed in Lost and Found which is located in the P.E. office. All unclaimed items are donated to a local charity at the end of each grading period.

**Attire:** We recommend that students have sneakers available, which are required for many activities. During cooler weather, a sweater or light jacket is recommended as students will spend time outdoors in the fresh air.

**Snacks and Water:** READ AfterSchool offers a nutritious snack and drink daily, which is included in the cost of the program. Water breaks are also offered frequently, and we encourage you to provide a labeled water bottle so that your student may have the option to hydrate throughout the afternoon. Feel free to pack healthy nutritious snacks of your own choosing. If you wish to restrict certain snack items for your child - such as candy or those with food allergies - please let us know.

### **Registration Procedures and Payments**

**Registration Procedures:** Registration is submitted online as follows:

- **New families:** Please visit our online registration site at [https://daycareworks.com/registration/readafterschool/start\\_registration.jsp](https://daycareworks.com/registration/readafterschool/start_registration.jsp)  
Refer to [Online Registration Instructions](#) for assistance.
- **Current families:** Please register through the Parent Portal using your username and password. <https://family.daycareworks.com/login.jsp>

Refer to our [Parent Portal User Guide](#) for additional information.

**Tuition Rates:** Please refer to our current rate sheet. Current rate sheets may be obtained by submitting the information form on our website (<https://www.readafterschool.com/contact-us/>) or by emailing [royce@readafterschool.com](mailto:royce@readafterschool.com). Tuition is billed and due monthly. Sibling discounts are available and applied to the oldest student.

**Registration Fee:** Registration fees are waived for families who register on or before Labor Day; however, a \$25 nonrefundable deposit is required to reserve a spot in the program. This deposit is applied to your first month's tuition. A \$50 registration fee applies to new registrations after Labor Day each year.

**Payments:** Payment may be made by Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or ACH Debit through the [Parent Portal](#). No payments are accepted on-site by READ AfterSchool staff. (We'd much rather our staff focus their attention on the students and telling you all about their day!) Payment is due monthly on the second of each month for the current month. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed if payment is not made by the 5th of the month. If payment is not received in full by the 10th of the month, the family may not return to READ AfterSchool.

**Late Pickup Fees:** READ AfterSchool is open until 6:00 p.m. We ask that you arrive early enough to pick up and sign out your child by that time. Late pickup fees in the amount of \$1 per minute per student are assessed and will automatically be charged to the family account. We understand that there are times when late arrivals occur due to traffic conditions and weather hazards, and we take this into consideration. However, please have a backup plan in place to avoid late fees. Identify someone who can pick up your child if you are going to be late, and be sure to add that individual to your authorized pickup list on the [Parent Portal](#) {*Personal tab / Add new Contact*}, and provide that authorized pickup with their assigned PIN.

### **Program Calendar**

READ AfterSchool follows the Hillsborough County Public Schools student calendar, and is in session on days when Hillsborough County Schools are in session. While every attempt is made to keep the calendar on the [Parent Portal](#) updated, the [official student calendar for Hillsborough County Public Schools](#) determines when the program is in session.

### **Illness & Injury**

**Allergies:** Please inform us if your child has allergies, especially those related to bug bites, sunscreen, food items or certain natural items. Allergies should be indicated at the time of registration on the registration form, and may be updated on the [Parent Portal](#) after registration. On the Parent Portal, go to the Personal tab, and select Update Information under your student's name.

**Medication:** READ AfterSchool encourages parents/guardians to arrange for the administration of medication during home and school hours and to coordinate with the school office and school

nurse according to school district policies. If you believe that the administration of medication during READ AfterSchool program hours is medically necessary, please speak with READ AfterSchool's director at 813-335-2077. No medication will be administered unless approved by the READ director in advance and unless the appropriate signed forms have been submitted.

**Illness:** Should your child become ill during READ AfterSchool hours (fever of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, etc) parents will be notified at once and must pick up the child immediately. The child will be kept isolated and given fluids, as necessary, until picked up by a parent. See also "**Illness or Injury Requiring Immediate Medical Attention**", below.

**Communicable Diseases:** Any child that is suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation will be isolated from other students immediately. Parents will be notified and must arrange for immediate pick-up of the infected child. Infestations must be alleviated before the child can return. If you know your child is sick or suspect s/he has an infestation, do not send them to READ AfterSchool. Be sure to call the READ AfterSchool office at (813) 334-0872 if you decide to keep your child at home.

**Injury:** Students are closely monitored. However, it is expected some minor accidents may occur. All READ AfterSchool staff are instructed in how to care for various "boo-boos", and several are certified in CPR and first aid.. Anything that requires treatment is documented on an Accident / Incident form, and then signed by a parent or legal guardian. The form includes information about the injury, treatment, how it occurred, and who was overseeing the area at the time of injury. It is necessary for a parent or legal guardian to sign and return this form to us for licensing records. See also "**Illness or Injury Requiring Immediate Medical Attention**", below.

**Illness or Injury Requiring Immediate Medical Attention:** For more serious illness or injury requiring medical attention, READ AfterSchool will first attempt to contact the parent/guardian, or the "Contact First" person indicated on the registration form. If the parent/guardian or first contact cannot be reached, READ will then contact the emergency contact person designated by the parent/guardian. Should READ AfterSchool be unable to reach the authorized contacts, READ will contact the child's physician and/or arrange for immediate emergency treatment. Consent for this treatment and consent to pay for emergency treatment is provided by the parent/guardian at the time of registration.

### **Discipline Policy**

READ AfterSchool adheres to an escalating discipline policy. This means that for a first or minor infraction, an instructor will speak to the student(s) involved at the time of infraction. The problem incurred by the student's behavior is discussed, and acceptable solutions are suggested.

For repeat infractions of a minor problem, time-outs and loss of privileges are used at the instructor's discretion. Repeat problems are brought to the attention of the READ AfterSchool office.

Serious, repetitive misbehavior will result in a conduct form that must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. When a student has received three (3) conduct forms s/he will be excluded from READ AfterSchool for one (1) day. When a student has received a total of six (6) conduct forms, s/he will be excluded from READ AfterSchool for one (1) week and when a student receives a total of nine (9) conduct forms, s/he will be excluded from READ AfterSchool permanently. We will discuss appropriate discipline with the parent when conduct forms are reviewed. Major or repeat infractions may result in immediate expulsion from the program at the discretion of the READ AfterSchool office. The following behaviors constitute major infractions:

- Physical violence of any sort is not acceptable at READ AfterSchool. This is considered a major infraction and is dealt with immediately by a conduct form and discussion with a parent/guardian. Recurrent violence may result in expulsion from the READ AfterSchool program.
- Vulgar language, racial slurs, and cultural insults are also considered major infractions. This behavior is not acceptable.
- Theft and/or destruction of personal property and equipment are major infractions. Discipline measures will depend on the child and the severity of the actions.

It is important that you, as the parent or guardian, feel confident in our discipline policies. Please don't hesitate to bring your concerns or suggestions to the staff's attention. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your views and desires.

### **Communications**

We know how important communication is between families and READ AfterSchool staff. Our instructors aim to provide you with feedback on your student's day regularly. If you have any feedback for us, please do let us know!

#### **How to reach us:**

- You may discuss your questions, ideas, or concerns directly with our site managers or staff upon pickup, or contact the READ AfterSchool office directly at 813-335-2077 or at [royce@readafterschool.com](mailto:royce@readafterschool.com).
- If you need to reach the READ AfterSchool staff while the program is in session, Ballast Point families can call the **READ team cellphone** at **(813) 334-0872**.

Here are a few other ways we stay in touch:

- **Remind texting app:** READ AfterSchool will send text messages to notify families of schedule changes, location changes, and other important announcements. We ask each family to sign up for Remind by following these instructions below. If you don't sign up, you may be missing important information!

If you have more than one student, please follow the instructions for your youngest child:

- [READ Remind for Kindergarten](#)
  - [READ Remind for 1st grade](#)
  - [READ Remind for grades 2-5](#)
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- **READ All About It and other emails:** When you register with READ AfterSchool, you will provide email addresses for parents and guardians. We send a weekly newsletter by email called READ All About It which we ask you to review. We may also send you other emails from time to time to communicate on important issues.
  - **Parent Portal:** Each family has their own account to access our [Parent Portal](#). Here is where you will find announcements, your student's attendance record, and monthly and annual account statements. You will also make payments on your account or set up AutoPay through the Parent Portal.
  - **Website:** Visit us at [www.readafterschool.com](http://www.readafterschool.com). We periodically post photos of cool things going on in the program, and include lots of information you may be interested in.

Thank you for taking the time to review our Program Handbook. We are looking forward to a great year!