

Teen and Community Center Overview

Our Promise

The Teen and Community Center is a place for youth. Without youth participation, we are not able to provide our services and, therefore, greatly appreciate any and all feedback from teens and their families, to ensure we are delivering what youth want and need. Teens will be given freedom as long as the expectations we have set for youth are being respected and met to the best of an individual's abilities at all times. Clara Martin Center staff will always respect youth participants and their families with the expectation that this is reciprocated. Our greatest focus is to keep our youth safe, ensure they feel valued, respected, and to keep inclusivity of all youth and staff at the forefront of actions and experiences at the Teen Center.

Inclusion Policy

Clara Martin Center embraces an inclusion approach that provides opportunities for all children to be themselves, participate in all aspects of our program, and be in a positive and supportive environment.

Access to the Center

Youth and teens are able to access the center during open times once the following steps and forms have been completed through the Teen Center Registration Form – available online at www.claramartin.org.

- Youth Participant Personal Information
- Parent / Legal Guardian Information
- Parent / Legal Guardian Permissions (media consent, viewing agreement, authorization for medical treatment, transportation)
- CMC Code of Conduct, Expectations, and General Protocols

Access to the Center will not be granted until all required documents are completed and received by Clara Martin Center staff.

Dismissal

It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to set guidelines with participating youth regarding whether they are allowed to leave the center during open hours. Staff members are not responsible for enforcing that participants remain at the center as long as they go through the proper check-in process, and staff are not responsible for participants after they leave the center. Parents / guardians must communicate with staff if a participant is being picked up or dropped off by someone other than their parent / guardian. CMC reserves the right to prevent a student or youth from being picked up by any person (including parent / guardian) who appears to be impaired.

Anyone approved to pick up your child must be listed on your Authorized Pickup Form. The Center must be notified that someone else is picking your child up BEFORE they are being dismissed. Even if it is an emergency, the Center needs your permission to release your child to someone other than the people you have listed on the Authorized Pickup Form. Written documentation naming the person(s) authorized by the parent/guardian for the release of the

child(ren) is required for dismissal. An adult 18 or older must sign the member out. An ID must be shown at dismissal if a Teen is being picked up.

Clara Martin Center staff will assume that both parents or guardians have the right to pick their child(ren) up unless a court order stating otherwise is on file. Without a court order, the Center staff cannot refuse a parent. If the Center has a court order and a non-custodial parent tries to pick up the child, the Teen Center will call the custodial parent. If the non-custodial parent leaves with the child, the Center will immediately call the police and report the situation. The Center will not place the other children at risk in a confrontation with the non-custodial parent.

In case of illness or discipline problems a parent or guardian is required to come immediately to pick up the child. If the child is not picked up, they will not be permitted to attend the program on the following day. If your child comes to the Center visibly sick, or voices concerns of feeling sick, Teen Center staff has the jurisdiction to decide whether the member needs to go home or not.

Expectations

Behavior Management and Code of Conduct

The purpose of creating and fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment is for every participant to know they are valued and celebrate their individual successes.

Expectations of Youth Participants:

CMC supports spaces outside of home and school for teens and young adults to participate in activities, learn new skills, give back to their community, and just have fun! In order to provide a positive experience for all, participation in the teen and community center activities requires adherence to some simple rules and expectations, including:

- Respect for self, others and property
- Approach new things and new people with an open mind
- Be honest, kind and polite: Bullying and teasing is not acceptable
- Be responsible for your actions and exercise self-discipline
- Make safe choices, avoid behavior that puts yourself or others in danger.
- Talk to someone you trust if you aren't feeling well, physically, emotionally, or mentally. Ask for help if you need it!
- Respect our space as a substance-free environment; **Possession, use or sale of illegal drugs or the unlawful use or misuse of lawful substances on teen and community center grounds will not be tolerated.**

Examples of Positive Behaviors include (but are not limited to):

- Respecting Teen Center members and all staff
- Respecting all Teen Center property, using equipment in the correct way.
- Being responsible
- Being helpful
- Participating in all programs and activities offered
- Not being afraid to try something new
- Encouraging others to participate or try a new program
- Following directions from staff
- Showing good sportsmanship

- Accepting and respecting others with different opinions or views
- Offering new program ideas or help facilitate an activity
- Being a good listener
- Being polite
- Doing their best to use appropriate language (or recognizing their use of inappropriate language and correcting themselves)
- Being friendly and open to meeting new people

The following are not permitted

- Profanity directed at others
- Racial slurs, derogatory phrases, or other forms of inappropriate and offensive language should never be used by anyone in the Center
- Bullying / Fighting– One Strike Rule: Bullying will not be tolerated at the Center. If bullying or physical violence occurs between participants at the Center, access to the center will be suspended while determination is made about future access.
- Misuse of equipment, supplies, facilities, etc. (Parents may be held responsible for replacement or repair of damaged equipment).
- Disrespect towards members, staff, etc.
- Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, or other drugs
- Going into restricted areas of the building
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Clothing that represents inappropriate messages or images (ex. Shirts with slurs, gang related apparel, etc.)
- Weapons of any kind including bullets and casings
- Any unsafe behavior as determined by the Teen Center Staff.

Expectations of Staff:

CMC facilitates a learning community and nurtures the capacity of participants to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all. In addition to adhering to the same expectations of participants, staff will:

- Provide participants with a warm atmosphere and the appropriate leadership during programs and activities
- Role model positive behavior and core values
- Approach behavioral intervention and conflict resolution using restorative practices and positive discipline
- Oversee the safety of all participants; If staff perceive that a participant or another person is in danger, staff will attempt to contact parents or legal guardians and take measures to maintain safety for all.
- Oversee participant check-in and check-out
- Carry out mandated reporting
- Maintain necessary communication with parents / guardians
- Resolve conflicts in-house as much as possible
- Maintain participant confidentiality as much as possible
- Committed to enhancing skills through ongoing professional development
- Maintain at least two adult supervisors on site at all times

Expectations of Parents / Guardians:

CMC intends to keep parents / guardians informed about teen and community center activities as much as possible through different mediums including our website usage and CMC social media. Parents / legal guardians of teen and community center participants are expected to:

- Fill out a registration form and update information when there is a change in address or contact information.
- Review and sign off on our Code of Conduct with the participating youth
- Meet with a supervising staff member at least once
- Be aware of teen and community center activity start and end times
- Communicate with staff if a participant is being picked up or dropped off by someone other than their parent / guardian.

Policies and Procedures

Mandated Reporting:

All Clara Martin Center staff are mandated reporters in the State of Vermont. By law, we are obligated to report to the Department of Children and Families if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a youth is being abused, neglected or is at risk of harm.

Discipline Policy:

Staff will use age-appropriate methods of discipline and guidance of members which encourage self-control, self-discipline, self-esteem, and cooperation. When a discipline issue presents itself, we initiate the following steps:

1. Redirection– encouraging the youth to change their behavior, choice of words, approach, etc.
2. Verbal warning– privately talk to the youth and address what the behavior is, ask the youth why the behavior is occurring, and offer suggestions as to how we can change the behavior
3. Take a break– take the youth to a new space for a while to relax, clear their mind, distract themselves, etc.
4. Disciplinary write-up– staff will have write up forms available to complete after the first 3 steps of the discipline policy were attempted, yet behavior hasn't changed. A write-up will be filled out to explain the situation and how the youth responded and then allow for a parent or guardian to be informed of the incident.

When a break or write up is used, this will allow for time to explain to the youth why their behavior is not acceptable and what is expected of them. This offers time for us to work with the youth, possibly find out why this behavior is occurring, and offer ways to help the youth be successful in this situation. If this conversation does not positively affect the behavior, this would be the time to discuss the issue with the child's legal parent/guardian to help create a better solution.

When a youth's behavior risks safety to themselves or others, a parent/guardian will be called and asked to pick up their child immediately. This behavior can automatically result in the removal from the program and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Being in prohibited spaces within the building– youth are only allowed in Teen Center spaces if they are with a Clara Martin Center staff member.
- Violating any safety rules
- Misuse of equipment
- Vandalizing Teen Center property
- Refusing to follow directions from staff
- Being intentionally disrespectful to other members or staff
- Disturbing other programs or program areas
- Recording or photographing other members or staff without their consent/without the photographer in the photo
- Name calling, obscene gestures, use of racial slurs, and inappropriate language
- Leaving the Teen Center building without permission or knowledge of Teen Center staff
 - If you are not approved to walk home, you should never leave the building without your parents or guardian being present to pick you up
- Provoking or instigating arguments or fights during anything Teen Center related (during Teen Center programs, on field trips, outside of the Teen Center, etc.)
- Not keeping your hands and body to yourself at all times.
- Any unsafe behavior as determined by the Teen Center Staff.

Redirecting and Addressing Prohibited Behaviors

Offenses:

#1 Verbal warning

#2 Age-appropriate redirection and conversation with staff

#3 Incident Report- Staff/Member/Director and/or parent conference

#4 Suspension. Coordinator/Director will determine appropriate length of time and will inform the parent/guardian

NOTE: Some offenses may result in immediate suspension or dismissal from the Teen Center

Staff members will model positive behavior management techniques and respectful communication with members. Safety of youth and staff will always be at the forefront of importance when de-escalating situations and negative behavior.

Cell Phones

Individuals are allowed to have and use their cell phones and electronics at the Teen Center, but we encourage positive use of all electronics and healthy time away from our devices.

Photo taking or video recording of other people, youth or staff, without consent will not be tolerated. This Teen Center is a place where everyone should feel safe, comfortable, and encouraged to be themselves. Taking photos or videos of other members, especially without their consent, will not be acceptable.

Clothing

Clara Martin Center understands that the responsibility for the dress and appearance of youth will be the responsibility of the individual and their parents/guardians. They have the right to determine how the youth dress, given that the attire is not destructive to Teen Center property,

aligns with health and safety requirements, and does not cause forms of disorder or disruption. We reserve the right to deny access to the center if clothing displays hate speech, drugs or other offensive material.

- Clothes with inappropriate graphics or writing may not be worn
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible to staff and not interfere with the vision of any other member or staff
- Hoodies must allow the face to be visible to staff.
- Any derogatory clothing that the Teen Center Staff see as unacceptable.

Personal Belongings

The Teen Center and staff are not responsible for any lost or stolen personal items. We strongly encourage youth to guard personal items closely and not leave personal items unattended. It is a good practice not to bring valuable items to the Teen Center.

Smoke Free Environment Policy

The Teen Center is a substance free environment which includes, but not is not limited to, tobacco products, e-cigarettes/vapes, alcohol, drugs, etc. The use of any tobacco products with the building or on the grounds is prohibited. In addition, substance use by any youth is banned at all Teen Center sponsored events, wherever that event takes place.

Health and Safety

Emergencies

The staff will report injuries on an injury report form and will inform parents/guardians at the end of the day. All head or eye injuries will immediately be reported to a parent/guardian. Any injury that causes bleeding or injury will also be reported to a parent/guardian as soon as possible. In the event of a more serious injury or illness, staff will make every attempt to contact a parent/guardian, and the child will be transported to the local hospital. Staff are required to complete an Injury Report whenever a member is injured during our Teen Center programming. If an Injury Report is filed, staff will call parents as soon as possible to inform them of the incident. Please make sure to include all allergies and medications in your child's registration information.

Open Door Policy

During our after-school Teen Center programs, youth are encouraged to check into the Teen Center at any time during open hours. Teens with parent or guardian approval, and signed permission, to walk home without supervision are allowed to leave whenever they wish. If a Teen is to be picked up daily by a parent or guardian, they can only leave if their parent or guardian is at the building to pick them up.

Our "Open Door Policy" is as follows- This policy means that our youth may enter and exit the facility/property at any time your child deems it is appropriate for them to do so. However, this will be held at "Enter once, leave once" meaning youth cannot go in and out of the facility/property multiple times during the same day to ensure member safety. Once a youth leaves, they cannot check back in on that given day. In addition, once the youth leaves the door/property of the Teen Center, they should leave the surrounding property—if they are leaving the building, they are to completely leave and not to hangout outside.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to have an Open Door Policy with Teen Center Staff for communication, meaning we are always available to answer comments, questions, and concerns via phone or email. As the Teen Center is a space for our Teens, we want to encourage parents and guardians to only visit the Teen Center between the hours of 9am-2pm.

Complaint Procedures

If any youth or family member has an issue or concern, we hope that they feel comfortable speaking to a Clara Martin Center staff member so that we can address the situation before it escalates. Staff will respect all concerns that youth or family members have and will address the problem in privacy and confidentiality.