

Frequently Asked Questions DHSP School Year 2021-2022 Community Schools and Cambridge Youth Programs

Why is DHSP changing its registration model this year?

We have learned that the first-come, first-served registration model negatively impacts our ability to equitably serve all families. Additionally, we know that most families' highest priority is selecting which days they wish their child to attend. We therefore adjusted our registration process and enrollment model to better prioritize equitable access and better meet the needs of families.

In order to ensure that families' resources don't prevent Cambridge children from receiving quality afterschool programming, we now have a sliding fee scale for tuition for the programs which deeply subsidizes children from low and moderate income families. We are also setting aside a percentage of seats for income-eligible families. If there are more children than can be accommodated in a program, a lottery will be run and families will be informed of their acceptance or placement on a waitlist by August 31st.

How many days can my child participate?

Families may register their child for 1-5 days of afterschool programming at Community Schools and Cambridge Youth Programs (CYP). For 4th and 5th graders registering for CYP Pre-Teen / Middle School Programs, which focus on building deep relationships and community, we recommend registering for at least 3 program days each week. Research suggests that young people who attend Out of School Time (OST) programs at least 3 days a week show more positive outcomes.

Will siblings be placed at the same locations?

We will have a family preference for placement. When one child's lottery number is selected and they are placed in a program, we will place their sibling(s) with them (provided that the family indicated the same sites for all children).

Does my child need to attend the same school for academic and afterschool programming?

No. Attendance at the same school is not required. [Click here for more information about Cambridge Public Schools](#), including locations and start / end times.

What date does programming end?

Programming for all of DHSP's afterschool programs, including Community Schools, will operate through June 2022. There will not be a need to register for another session.

Will there be afterschool programming on half days? Holidays? Vacation weeks?

Yes. Community Schools and CYP will offer programming on CPS half days and full-day programming during February and April Vacations. CYP will also provide full-day programming on some CPS holidays. A full schedule will be provided when families enroll. Half-day and vacation week programming may incur an additional cost, and the process for registering will be shared with families who are offered enrollment in September.

What are the tuition rates?

Families pay tuition for an entire year of programming, broken into monthly payments. Monthly tuition rates are based on household size, family income and the number of days that children attend programming. [Click here to view monthly tuition rates for the Community Schools](#) (excluding Fletcher-Maynard Academy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Community Schools, which is below).

We have made adjustments to our tuition rates at the Fletcher Maynard Academy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Schools to reflect the fewer number of hours that these two programs operate each day. [Click here to view FMA and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Community Schools tuition rates.](#)

In our effort to create equity across our programs by creating a sliding fee scale and lottery-based acceptance rather than the first-come, first-serve model, an unintended consequence was a steep increase in tuition rates for 4th and 5th graders enrolling in Cambridge Youth Programs, especially for low-income families. After careful consideration, we have modified the tuition rates for 4th and 5th graders participating in Cambridge Youth Programs ([click here to view modified rates](#)). Tuition for 6-8th graders remains free.

How will I get billed and what are my payment options?

Once selected for the lottery and the number of enrolled days are determined, you will receive notification of your monthly tuition based on our sliding fee scale. Payment can be made by personal check or money order to the program each month.

Is transportation provided?

Cambridge Public Schools' Transportation Policy allows for children to be dropped off at various locations, including other schools and Youth Centers, provided that there is a bus route between the schools/locations. Please contact the CPS Transportation Office at 617-349-6862 to inquire about your child's eligibility for transportation.

Can I change which days or how many days my child attends a program after we receive our lottery placement?

You can reduce the number of days your child attends a program during the year by providing notice to the program.

The ability to change enrollment days or increase the number of days your child will attend a program each week will depend on program capacity. We expect there to be greater flexibility at the CYP programs to be able to shift enrollment days.

Would choosing fewer or more days increase the likelihood that my child will get a spot?

You should sign up for the number of days that you are interested in sending your child.

At the time your child's number comes up in the lottery, DHSP staff will take your family's preferred site locations and requested number of days into consideration. We will offer the maximum number of days available at one of the site locations you indicated that your child could attend, prioritizing your first choice for consideration.

What are the enrollment options for 4th & 5th grade students?

4th and 5th grade students can enroll in a Community Schools program or at one of the Youth Centers. Community Schools serve children in JK-5th grade. Youth Centers serve children in 4th-8th grade. Families of 4th and 5th graders can enter both lotteries, as the lotteries are held separately.

Are snacks provided?

Yes. All of DHSP's afterschool programs provide daily snacks for children in attendance. If a child has specific nutritional needs, families are encouraged to pack an individual snack for their child.

What protocols and precautions will be in place for COVID-19?

Our top priority is the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. We will follow the guidance of the Cambridge Public Health Department and the Cambridge Public Schools. Families will be notified of the latest COVID-19 guidelines at afterschool programs prior to their start in September.