CodeMasters

After School Program

Student/Parent Handbook
2019-2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to CodeMasters!

This Handbook is designed to give students, parents and guardians a helpful insight into the CodeMasters After School Program offered by the Florida Education Fund (FEF). It includes detailed information about Program activities, procedures, and policies. Please read this Handbook carefully and keep it in a safe place for easy reference during the school year.

CodeMasters strives to provide an atmosphere where students can enjoy, grow, and learn. The staff always welcomes suggestions and ideas that will help us make your child's time at the Program beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us at anytime.

Many thanks to our CodeMasters staff for their energy and the outstanding job they do with the students each day and to the parents and guardians of the students in CodeMasters for your support and encouragement. The students benefit greatly from the many special qualities contributed to the CodeMasters by so many committed and caring people!

If you have any questions about the content of this Handbook, please feel free to call me at 813-272-2772.

I look forward to the time that we will be spending together.

Best regards,

Lyra Logan, J.D.
Program Director

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Staff
Program Director: Lyra Logan, J.D.
Program Manager: Monica Montes
Program Coordinator: Roniesha Hardee

Florida Education Fund
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For concerns about your child and/or questions about schedules, policies, or staffing, please call Lyra Logan at (813) 272-2772.

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THE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

At all sites, the CodeMasters Program uses a designated area where students have access to a computer lab.

The staff at each site includes a Site Coordinator and a Site Teacher, both of whom are certified teachers and/or experienced computer programmers. During the year, the Program also utilizes the volunteer tutoring and instructional services of Ph.D. students who are current FEF McKnight Doctoral Fellows. Background checks are performed on all staff members and vendors employed by the Program. The Site Coordinator is your main point of contact and oversees the Program and onsite staff.

CodeMasters' operating policy for the Program maintains a maximum staff/student ratio of one to eighteen.

APPLICATION & ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

CodeMasters does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability status. Enrollment application forms for the Program are available at each Program school, and completed application forms will be collected at the FEF offices and at the schools.

Parents of applicants who are accepted into the Program will be notified by the FEF and must complete a permission form and an intake packet for each student enrolled in the Program. These form include the student's personal information, emergency contacts, full legal names of persons authorized to pick up the student, and health and other information. All forms must be completed prior to student attendance and will be collected at the FEF offices. A copy of each student's permission form and intake packet will be kept on file at the student's Program site. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to update information in the permission form and intake packet should any changes occur in emergency, telephone, or other information.

Each site has a limited number of enrollment spaces available. When all spaces are filled, each subsequent applicant's name will be placed on a waiting list, and the applicant's parent/guardian will be contacted as space is available. To be placed on the waiting list, a permission form and completed intake packet must be submitted to the FEF offices.

Permission forms and intake packets must be completed each school year.

SCHEDULE OF OPERATION

CodeMasters operates on all days that Public Schools are open for students.

Early Dismissal

CodeMasters will be closed whenever Public Schools are dismissed early due to inclement weather or whenever there is an unexpected event that impacts the safe use of the Program site.

Field Trips

For students in secondary schools, field Trips will be scheduled from time to time and usually available at no additional cost. The Site Coordinator will determine whether students who displayed poor behavior on prior trips will be allowed to attend future field trips. Information about each field trip, along with a parent/guardian permission form, will be sent home with students at least one week in advance of the field trip.

In order for a student to attend a field trip, his/her attendance permission form must be returned by the due date noted on the form. If an attendance permission form has not been returned by the due date and a student wishes to attend a trip, he or she will be placed on a waiting list and the parent/guardian will be notified if a cancellation occurs. The student will be able to attend the Program on the day of the trip only if a cancellation occurs.

The Program is unable to provide separate staffing at the Program site, or on field trip sites, for students who are unable to participate in a field trip activity. In order for a student to attend the Program when a field trip is scheduled, the student must be able to attend the field trip and participate in the field trip activity.

Unless otherwise notified, transportation for field trips will be provided by chartered school bus. Students should wear appropriate clothing and should bring spending money for snack bars or gift shops, if desired.

Parents/guardians are always welcome to join us and may make arrangements by calling the Site Coordinator. The successful completion of a background check is required at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity. If a parent/guardian would like to join us on a field trip, or for an in-house activity, please see the Site Coordinator for additional information about completing a background check.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Students are expected to attend the Program on a regular basis. Any student who is absent from the Program on three (3) separate days will be dismissed from the Program unless his or her absence is excused due to illness; medical, dental or other appointment that cannot be scheduled at another time; recognized religious observance; family emergency or event such as a funeral or birth; or a prearranged absence, early dismissal or tardy that has been approved in advance.

Daily Sign-In

Students must report directly to the Program as soon as they are dismissed from their regular school day and sign-in by the indicated program start time. Students will be considered tardy if they sign-in more than five (5) minutes after the start time. Three (3) unexcused tardies equals one absence.

The safety of each student is paramount to CodeMasters staff. If a student will not be attending the Program as scheduled, it is **essential** that the student's parent/guardian **call the Site Coordinator** to report the student's absence from the Program. To avoid miscommunication at school sites, please be sure to call even when an absence has been communicated to the school about the regular school day or to a Program staff person orally.

Please help us avoid unnecessary concern about a student's safety by **calling the Site Coordinator,** whenever a student will be absent from the Program.

Daily Sign-Out

The Program intake packet includes a form for parents/guardians to indicate how students will leave the Program each day. All secondary students must either sign themselves out or be signed out by an authorized adult when leaving the Program at the end of the day. All elementary students must be signed out by an authorized adult when leaving the Program at the end of the day

If a student will be picked up from the Program each day, the student will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or person listed in the student's intake packet, unless the student's parent/guardian notifies the Program in writing prior to pickup time. If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a student, the staff member will ask to see picture identification before the student is released.

Early Sign-Out

All students must be signed out by a parent/guardian if leaving the Program early. Students will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or person listed in the student's intake packet, unless the student's parent notifies the Program in writing prior to pickup time. If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a student, the staff member will ask to see picture identification before the student is released.

Late Pickup

CodeMasters closes at each site at the indicated end time. We ask parents/guardians or others authorized to pickup students to (a) arrive by five minutes before the end time to allow students enough time to tidy up and gather their belongings; and (b) if running late, to take a moment to call the Site Coordinator at the number provided so a staff member can speak to the student about the delay.

If a student is picked up more than five (5) minutes after the site end time, the late pickup will be noted. After the third occurrence of a late pickup, any additional late pickup may result in a student's suspension or removal from the Program.

The staff is unable to remain on site after the Program end time for activity updates or consultations about students. We will be happy to discuss special requests or exchanges of detailed information over the telephone or at a meeting scheduled during Program hours.

PROGRAMMING

CodeMasters provides a carefully designed schedule of activities that are grounded in evidence-based programs and strategies and focused on: 1) academic support; 2) life/social skills development; and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) programming.

Daily Snacks

At most sites, students will receive a nutritious snack when they arrive at CodeMasters in the afternoon. If your child has any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or prefers different or additional food, please feel free to send a snack with your child. Students will not be allowed to use vending machines on the premises.

Academic Support/Literacy Instruction

CodeMasters stresses the importance of homework in promoting academic excellence and self-discipline and sets time aside every day for students to complete their assignments or work on academic skill development. Staff members will supervise the homework area and assist the students with their work, but will not be able to check each student's homework for accuracy. Parents are strongly encouraged to review homework on a daily basis

Students having difficulty meeting benchmarks in Reading will work though lessons in the Program's differentiated literacy curriculum. Students having difficulty meeting benchmarks in other core subjects will be assigned to work with trained tutors.

Students who do not have homework and are not working with tutors may use homework time to practice academic skills, explore STEM careers, or read a book.

Life/Social Skills Development

CodeMasters stresses the importance of strong social awareness, relationship, problem-solving, and responsible decision-making skills and sets time aside for students to review and practice these skills to ensure their successful transition to adulthood. During this time, students will work on community building; fighting fair; developing pro-social, listening and communication skills; understanding others' perspectives; managing anger and aggression; resolving conflicts; developing character; making decisions; avoiding peer pressure; understanding culture; respecting differences; and avoiding stereotypes.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Programming

Students in CodeMasters will spend the largest block of time each day learning to design, create, and invent through STEM/computer programming. They will work with committed teachers to understand the basics of coding within the context of robotics, game design, web design and/or mobile app development. At the end of the second and fourth quarters, they will showcase their projects.

Through this hands on exposure to STEM through coding, students not only will learn mathematical and computational concepts, but also will gain insight into the inner workings of technology and learn strategies for solving problems, designing projects, and communicating ideas, a group of skills useful for all. Through CodeMasters, students will develop computer programming skills that can eventually lead to industry certification, and they will begin to master the tools with which they may one day write software that can connect people, solve problems, and save lives.

Nutrition Education and Physical Fitness

Elementary students in CodeMasters will participate daily in physical fitness activity and weekly receive guidance on making healthy and nutritious snack and meal choices.

Use of Online Resources

Students in CodeMasters will use STEM Fuse, Khan Academy, code.org, http://appinventor.mit.edu, https://scratch.mit.edu/, and other similar websites to learn about computer programming and/or explore careers and also will work in the Florida Education Fund (FEF)'s learning management system at fefaccess.org as well as FEF partner learning management systems to view course material, take assessments, meet with mentors virtually, and discuss work and activities with other FEF students in grades 4 through 10. Please note that, for students to use some of these Web sites, FEF will need to create an email address for each student, which FEF will provide to parents/guardians upon request and otherwise keep private. These email addresses will not be provided to students for the purposes of sending and receiving email messages. Please contact Monica Montes at the Florida Education Fund at mmontes@fefonline.org or by calling 813-272-2772 if you do not wish for your child to have such an email address created.

Orientation & Showcases

Parent/guardian participation is expected during the following activities:

Parent/Student Orientation. This one (1)-hour fall event is designed to provide parents with information about CodeMasters, its policies and schedules. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to meet staff, learn about the Program offerings and activities throughout the upcoming year, and ask questions. They also will receive information about volunteer opportunities and suggestions for helping to support their children's academic success through home rewards, monitoring and other strategies.

Fall and Spring Student Coding Showcases. Each of these events will be scheduled for two (2) hours. During the first hour of each event, students will have the opportunity to publicly display to their parents/guardians and others in the community the coding projects they have worked on in computer programming classes during the past two quarters. Each student will demonstrate the animation, game, app or web program s/he has designed and created through coding. During the second hour, parent/guardians and students will participate in a workshop on a topic related to students' postsecondary pursuits, for instance, choosing high school courses, the college application process; enrolling in vocational training programs; student loans, scholarships, and financial aid; application essays; SAT/ACT testing, etc.

At least one parent/guardian of each registered student should attend these events. Dates and locations will be provided in notifications sent home with students and emailed to email addresses provided on required Program forms.

Student Attire

Students must wear their school uniforms while participating in the Program at the school site or on Program field trips. At orientations and showcases, students must dress appropriately at all times and will be asked to leave an event for inappropriate dress, including hats, headscarves and do-rags or any clothing that reveals a bare belly and/or visible boxers or underwear.

Personal Items

Since we cannot guarantee the safe return of personal belongings, CodeMasters asks that any personal possessions be left in backpacks during a student's time in the Program. As storage space will be at a minimum, we ask also that students take all belongings with them when they leave the Program site each day.

Telephone Use by Students

The staff will be happy to convey messages to students when necessary, but it is not possible for students to make or receive telephone calls while at CodeMasters. Parents are welcome to call the Program to speak to the Site Coordinator about questions or concerns regarding their children.

HEALTH POLICY

Student's Illness / Accident / Emergencies
If a student is absent from school due to illness, s/he may not come to the Program that day. In general, a student must have attended school during the school day to attend the Program.

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the Program or exhibits any of the following conditions, his/her parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be contacted and asked to pick up the student within one hour of notification:

- contagious disease
- fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting or diarrhea
- accident requiring medical attention
- head lice

If a student is in need of urgent hospital attention, staff will call 911, the student will be transported to the hospital by ambulance, and the student's parent/guardian will be held responsible for all costs incurred.

Please report any changes of emergency contact information, employment, telephone numbers, or addresses to the Program Director as soon as they become available. Although this information will be kept confidential, it will be shared with appropriate staff members to facilitate communication with parents or guardians in emergency situations.

Abuse and Neglect Policy
The Program staff members are mandated reporters and as such, are required by Section 415.504, Florida Statutes, to report all suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The parents, students and staff of CodeMasters are asked to treat each other with respect, tolerance, kindness, and consideration. Students must exhibit professional, respectful classroom conduct at all times and will be asked to leave a class or activity for inappropriate behavior, including yelling, using profanity or fighting.
The following procedures will be followed consistently in the event participants behave unacceptably

a) First offense: the Site Coordinator will discuss the problem with a student's parent/guardian.

b) Second offense: the Site Coordinator will notify the participant's parent/guardian that the student has been dismissed from the Program.

NOTE: Serious or disruptive/destructive behavior that interferes with normal Program operation will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal with no previous notice to a parent/guardian.

Any inappropriate behavior by a parent, including verbal abuse of a student or staff member or confrontations with staff members in the presence of a student, is grounds for termination of the family's participation in the Program without notice. A suspension or termination decision may be appealed by contacting the Program Director.

COMMUNICATION

CodeMasters maintains an open door policy. Please feel free to direct questions or concerns related to any facet of the Program to the Program Director at any time. Any questions regarding policies, staffing, activities, or a student's participation in the Program may be directed to the Program Director at **813-272-2772**. Voicemail is in place 24 hours a day and will record a message if no one is available to answer your call.

If a concern involving a staff member arises, please speak directly to the staff member involved. If the matter cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, the Program Director and Site Coordinator will meet with the staff member and arrange a meeting with the staff member and parent to discuss and resolve the concern.

The first priority of the staff is to focus as much attention as possible on the students. In order to meet the needs of the students and the staff during Program hours, we ask that parents limit their conversation with Program staff members to subjects involving their children. The Site Coordinator or Program Director is available to answer all other questions that arise. Please feel free to call us at any time.

SUMMER PROGRAM

A high-quality, engaging six (6)-week summer STEM camp program is offered during the summer. Program dates will be released online at www.fefonline.org/code by April 1 along with summer camp registration materials. All students who successfully complete the After School Program are encouraged to attend the summer camp.

The summer STEM camp is designed to further expose students to computer programming and its link to a variety of STEM careers. Middle school students will learn to build and program robots, and high school students will learn to program more sophisticated applications, working through computer science and advanced computer programming curricula. These applied STEM camp components will culminate with a competition focused on further demonstrating the importance of math and technology and their connection to real-world problem-solving.

In addition to exploring STEM in action, students will prepare to successfully transition to middle and high school with guidance from school counselors; plan for college or advance training with help from counselors and college representatives; tour college campuses; receive career planning advice from professionals working in various STEM fields; and visit cultural and science venues to add realism to their studies.