



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# THE Y FOR A BETTER US

Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA  
Member Handbook



# *Welcome to the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA!*

At the Y, we live out our commitment to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility by providing programming based on our four core values – honesty, caring, respect and responsibility.

As a member of the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA, you have total access to the Y facility and the many classes and programs that can help you achieve vitality through greater health and an improved sense of well-being. To explore opportunities that can help make this happen for you at the Y, please speak with our Member Services staff.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA has contributed to the lives of thousands of boys, girls, men and women of all races, religions and economic backgrounds. We are a charitable, cause-driven organization with the unique opportunity to impact the lives of all ages.

Engage in our programs, volunteer your time and let the caring spirit of our organization help make our community a healthier and happier place of all ages.

This handbook is designed to answer some of your questions and help you become more involved in our Y. Please don't hesitate to speak with one of our caring staff if you have additional needs or we can be of assistance in any way!

**Thank you for being a part of the Y!**

## **WHO WE ARE**

### **Our Mission**

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all

### **Our Values**

Caring  
Honesty  
Respect  
Responsibility

## **WHAT WE STAND FOR**

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community through the following areas of focus:

### **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.

We believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. Through the Y, thousands of youth cultivate the values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health and educational achievement.

### **HEALTHY LIVING**

Improving the nation's health and well-being.

The Y brings families closer together, encourages good health and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun and shared interests. As a result, thousands of youth, adults and families on the Gulf Coast receive the support, guidance and resources needed to achieve greater health and well-being.

We help individuals and families build and maintain healthy habits for spirit, mind and body in their everyday lives. By helping kids, adults, families, and seniors improve their health and well-being, we build a stronger community every day.

### **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA has been listening and responding to our communities' most critical social needs since 1975. Thanks to community partners and thousands of volunteers who devote their time, talent and financial support, the Y is able to provide access to life-changing programs and give thousands in our community the chance to learn, grow and thrive.

## MEMBERSHIP

Simply put, the Y is for everyone. All people in our region are invited to join and enjoy our life-enhancing programs and services, regardless of age, faith, race, background, ability or socioeconomic circumstance.

With a YMCA membership, you have full access to our centers, as well as priority registration and member-only rates for programs and services.

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

We offer an array of flexible membership categories to ensure you find a fit for your unique household.

Choose the membership category that's right for you from the list below:

**SINGLE** – One adult age 18-62

**FAMILY** – The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA has defined a family as a couple legally married or single parent and their legal/biological children living in the same household, claimed on yearly taxes.

**SENIOR** – One adult age 63 and older

**SENIOR COUPLE** – Two adults, one of which is age 63 or older, who live in the same household

**YOUTH** – One youth age 11-17

**STUDENT** – One student age 18-21 taking 12 or more credit hours in any post-high school program. Student ID required.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

As a member of the Y, you are part of an organization committed to helping everyone in our community have the opportunities they need to learn, grow and thrive. Our membership policies are designed to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where individuals and families feel welcome and at home.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Members join the Y in an intentional step toward seeking new opportunities to learn, grow and thrive. Members come together with men, women, and children from the community in a commitment to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. With the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, the Y works with each member every day to help them realize their potential. We promote and expect the same from our members to create a safe, fun, inclusive and nurturing place for all.

Our Code of Conduct outlines these expectations.

We encourage the following:

- Engaging in Healthy Lifestyles
- Respecting Differences and Celebrating Diversity
- Modeling Empathy

- Learning New Skills
- Meeting Other People
- Supporting Relationships
- Volunteering
- Being a Role Model
- Behaving in a Safe Way

The following are not permitted on YMCA premises, in YMCA vehicles or at YMCA sponsored functions:

- Inappropriate sexual, physical or verbal contact
- Posturing, bullying or intimidation
- Using or possessing alcohol (unless express permission is granted for special events) or illegal chemicals
- Smoking on YMCA property – All of our buildings and grounds are smoke-free environments. This includes vaping, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco.
- Carrying or concealing a weapon or any device or object that may be used as a weapon
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language, or any type of menacing behavior
- Physical contact with another person in an angry, aggressive, inappropriate or threatening way
- Verbally abusive behavior, including angry or vulgar language, swearing, name-calling or shouting
- Derogatory or unwelcome comments based on individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, citizenship, disability, sexual orientation or any legally protected status
- Sexually explicit conversation or behavior; any sexual contact with another person
- Inappropriate, immodest or sexually revealing attire
- Theft or behavior that results in the destruction or loss of property
- Any other behavior deemed in conflict with the YMCA Mission by the CEO or Branch Executive Director

As a private organization, the YMCA reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who has been accused or convicted of any crime involving sexual abuse, is or has been a registered sex offender, has a history of violent offenses, has ever been convicted of any offense relating to the use, sale, possession or transportation of narcotics or habit forming and/or dangerous drugs, or is presently or habitually under the influence of dangerous drugs or chemicals, narcotics or intoxicating beverages.

Anyone who feels that this Code of Conduct is being violated should immediately report the behavior to a staff

person on duty. YMCA staff members are eager to be of assistance. Please notify a staff member if assistance is needed.

## SEX OFFENDER POLICY

The YMCA conducts regular sex offender screenings on all members, participants, and guests. If a sex offender match occurs, the YMCA reserves the right to cancel membership, end program participation, and remove visitation access.

## MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND PHOTO IDS

Safety is a cornerstone of our center operations, and membership cards (and photo IDs) are essential tools to maintaining safety at all Y locations.

- All members age 11 and older receive membership cards. Members under age 11 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who possesses a membership card.
- We require that all members, adults and children, have a current photo on file in our system. Having pictures of adults and children in our software system ensures those entering the YMCA are who they are and that our children are with adults identified on their membership unit.
- Your membership card is very important. Please keep track of it and present it at the Welcome Center every time you enter a Y location. If you happen to arrive without your card, you may show another form of photo ID, such as your driver's license, to secure entry.
- If your card does not scan, we will verify your membership by other means, such as an additional form of identification, while you wait. If we find your membership is not current, you may not enter the Y.
- Never loan your card or transfer your membership to someone else; these actions are grounds for termination.

## MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURE

The membership fee structure is reviewed regularly. Increases that occur reflect increases in operating costs and are made to ensure quality programs and services. Membership dues, enrollment fees and program fees are subject to change at any time. YMCA policy is to notify you by mail 30-days in advance of any increase taking effect.

Your membership can be paid via:

1. **Monthly Automatic Bank Draft:** Under this plan a charge will occur automatically on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, beginning with your first full

month of membership. You may choose to draft from your checking or savings account. Our monthly draft continues as long as you are a member. You may discontinue your monthly draft by signing a membership cancellation form, available at the Member Services desk, 30 days prior to your next draft.

2. **Non-monthly draft:** Payments made in advance may be paid in full by using cash, check or major credit card. Non-monthly drafts must be made in 3-month, 6-month, or 12-month installments.

## JOINING FEE

The joining fee is a one-time fee for as long as your YMCA membership remains current. Memberships discontinued 30 days or more will be charged a joining fee.

The joining fee and first month of membership dues are due at the time of sign up.

## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Adding or removing members from an existing Y membership is considered a change in membership.

Changes in bank or credit card information must be made by the member in writing 30 days before the next scheduled automatic debit/bank draft by completing a Membership Change Form.

## MEMBERSHIP HOLD

Membership privileges may be held for a maximum period of 2 consecutive months per calendar year. During the period of hold, all facility access/usage and preferred program fees are denied to members on the account. In order to "hold" membership privileges, the member must complete a membership hold form available at the Member Services desk. All Hold requests require a notice of 5 business days.

## MEMBERSHIP CANCELLATIONS

The Y does not have long-term or annual contracts with its members. Membership runs on a month-to-month basis with automatic monthly withdrawal of membership dues. All cancellations must be done in person and require a **written 30-day notice** to stop the bank draft.

Annual memberships can be cancelled at any time, with a pro-rated refund issued for the unused portion.

Cancellations are not complete until confirmation email is received from the Y. Membership Fees and Joining Fees are non-refundable. However, we will assist you in transferring to another Y if requested.

## MEMBERSHIP REFUNDS

A YMCA membership may only be refunded within a 30-day period of purchase, (less \$10.00 administrative fee) if a written cancellation is submitted within that 30 days. Joining fees are not refundable. Membership fees due to lack of use or non-attendance are not refundable. Help us help you by monitoring your monthly bank statements. If you discover an error by the Y and report it within 60 days, we will correct our error and refund the appropriate amount. After 60 days, we will only be able to correct the error.

## PROGRAM REFUNDS

Request in writing made prior to the first class—100%.  
Request in writing made after the first class—50%.  
Request after the second class—NO REFUND. Canceled programs—100% refund or amount may be credited toward another course or program. All refunds not related to a Y program cancellation will be charged a \$10.00 administrative fee.

## NATIONWIDE MEMBERSHIP

Nationwide Membership enables you to visit any participating Y in the United States at no extra charge through membership at your home YMCA. Nationwide Membership is valid for active, full facility Y members. Members must use their home Y at least 50% of the time. Simply present your active membership card and photo ID at any participating Y. Some limitations may apply.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA believes everyone should have the opportunity to participate in YMCA membership and programs regardless of their ability to pay. Financial assistance is made possible through the generosity of our Annual Campaign donors and proceeds from special fundraising events. Everyone, including existing members, is welcome to apply. If your income changes during the course of your membership, you are welcome to contact us to learn more about this program.

## MILITARY OUTREACH INITIATIVE

The Armed Services YMCA and the Department of Defense Outreach Initiative offers YMCA memberships to eligible military families and personnel who may not have access to a nearby military facility. Eligible military families and personnel include:

- Family member of deployed National Guard and Reservists

- Active Duty families who line in one of the selected Joint Bases created by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process (contact Military OneSource for a list of eligible Joint Bases)
- Active Duty Independent Duty personnel and their families as approved by their Military Service Headquarters
- Relocated spouses and family members of deployed Active Duty personnel
- Note: Eligibility is for Title 10 personnel only
- The Department of Defense will underwrite memberships at participating YMCAs for an initial six-month period for each eligible family and service member. Membership renewals in subsequent six-month intervals (up to 12 or 18 months depending on eligibility) will be funded based on military family's or service member's ability to meet the participation requirement of 8 visits to a YMCA each month.

## GUEST POLICY

- The guest policy is intended to allow guests to enjoy the Y and consider membership. Each guest is limited to three visits per calendar year and then may purchase a membership.
- Youth guests under the age of 18 must present a waiver form signed by a parent or legal guardian in order to enter the YMCA.
- All guests entering the wellness floor or attending classes, must be 16 years or older
- Members may request a guest pass for a limited time for immediate family members visiting from out of town. We may restrict guest usage based on safety and individual branch circumstances.
- Members are responsible for their guests' behavior; misbehavior may result in member's loss of privileges
- Guests that are local (within a 50-mile radius) are welcome 3 times per year.
- Guests must be 11 years old or older to be or bring a guest. All guests must present a valid photo ID and sign a waiver form.

## LONG-TERM GUEST POLICY

Long-term guest passes will be available as an exception for those who do not have access to our membership due to a limited stay in the area (e.g. College students on break, "snow birds" and work visitors). They will be offered for two weeks or one month and are not consecutively

renewable. Year-round residents are not eligible for long term guest passes.

## CAREGIVER

Caregivers will be issued a caregiver guest pass to be used when bringing the member to the Y. They are required to stay with the member throughout the visit. Caregivers such as nannies and adult assistants will be required to have their own membership for personal use of the Y facilities. They are not included, as caregivers, in any membership, including family memberships.

## SMOKING & ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The Y is a substance-free environment. Tobacco, e-Cigs, and any other substance use is not permitted within the facility or on facility property, including the entrance, parking lot and any properties or vehicles utilized for Y programming.

## LOCKER ROOMS

All of our facilities have locker rooms for changing, showering and safely storing your items while you are at the Y. All of our locker rooms are for day use only. Please do not leave your belongings in the lockers overnight as they will be removed by our custodial staff at the end of each day. Locks are not provided. We encourage you to bring and use padlocks to secure your belongings.

- Children 5 and over must use gender-appropriate locker rooms. Please follow all posted age restrictions.
- Please remain properly covered while in public areas of the locker room.
- Use of any electronic device with camera capabilities are prohibited in the locker rooms. This includes cell phones, tablets, DSI games, IPOD touches and other devices. Failure to follow this rule could result in suspension or termination of your membership.
- The YMCA prohibits any inappropriate behavior. Please report any such behavior to a staff person.

## LOCKERS

Lockers marked "Daily Use Lockers" are available to all members and guests for day use only. All locks remaining at the end of the day may be removed. Its contents stored and for up to 30 days then donated to a local charity. All unmarked lockers are rental lockers only. For information on how to rent a locker please see the Member Services Desk.

**Please remember to lock all personal belongings items in the locker!** The Y is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

The Y provides opportunities for people with physical and development disabilities to participate in programs. Contact Member Services about accommodations needed for participation.

## SECURITY

We strive to ensure your security and safety while on any Y premises. That's why we place so much emphasis on the use of membership ID's for check-ins. However, we cannot be responsible for any theft or damage to your personal property, either in our buildings or parking lots. Please remember, you are responsible for securing any items you bring on site.

If you do have one of your possessions stolen or damaged, please complete an incident report at the Member Services desk. Be assured that we do track such incidents and take any steps we can to prevent them from happening again. Leave valuables at home and protect the property you do choose to bring by securing it in a locker. YMCA staff are not permitted to hold or watch your valuables for you. Also note that we do not recommend leaving valuables in a locked car.

Some of our YMCAs utilize video technology to protect all persons. Cameras are installed in open/public areas only and not in private areas such as locker rooms, restrooms, etc.

## WEAPONS POLICY

No weapons of any kind, at any time on YMCA property. Regardless of any valid license to possess, YMCA members are prohibited from carrying onto YMCA property any firearms, Tasers, large knives or other objects YMCA staff determine to be dangerous to the safety of their members.

## LOST AND FOUND

The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA is not responsible for any lost or stolen property. However, we do keep lost and found items whenever possible. Typically, items not claimed after one week are donated to those in need. Please ask the Member Services desk staff about any lost items.

## ATTIRE

They Y is a family-oriented organization, and your attire must always be appropriate throughout all areas of our

facilities. Proper workout attire; shorts and a shirt (no bare midriffs) and gym shoes (no open toe shoes, flip flops or sandals) should be worn in our wellness centers, group fitness studios, track and other program areas. Swimsuits are required in the pools—no cutoffs or street clothes are permitted. Coverage is required even in the locker rooms, steam room and whirlpool, so keep a towel, wrap or other clothes on at all times.

## CHILDREN IN THE YMCA

At the Y, we are committed to giving children and teens the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. Each day, hundreds of kids come to the Y to learn, play, dream and achieve in a safe, fun and welcoming environment. Kids' experiences at the Y are made even better when parents and guardians are aware of the policies regarding the supervision of children at our facilities and programs. These important policies are designed to ensure the Y is a secure, caring place for all children.

## SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

Parents, guardians or designated adults are responsible for their children at all times when they are in the YMCA facilities until such times as a YMCA staff member or representative assumes responsibility for the children, as during a program or in Child Watch. Parental supervision of the children must resume immediately after a scheduled program concludes.

- Parents or guardians of children under the age of 11 must remain on YMCA property while their children are at the Y. The only exceptions to this policy are if children are enrolled in a fee based supervised YMCA program.
- Only children age 11 and older are allowed at the Y in an unsupervised environment (without their parents or guardians present).
- All youth ages 11-18 are eligible for a YMCA Youth membership.

## CHILD WATCH CENTER GUIDELINES

We strive to provide a supervised, safe, enriching environment through non-structured, age-appropriate play activities in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment. This service is offered as a member benefit for family memberships at the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA.

- Children ages 3 months-12 years, may stay at the Child Watch Center for up to two hours per day.
- It is a Y policy that all children be signed in and out by parent or legal guardian who signs the child in when attending Y Child Watch.

- A child may not participate in Child Watch if any of the following symptoms have existed within the past 24 hours: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, lice, pink eye, green nasal discharge, any unexplained rash, boils, impetigo or ringworm. We follow these guidelines in accordance with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children not well enough to attend school cannot attend the Y Child Watch.
- If your child cries for more than 10 minutes or exhibits aggressive behavior, you will be notified.
- No nut products, gum or candy is allowed in the Y Child Watch.
- Please provide all necessary items for your child: bottles, diapers, wipes, pacifiers, etc.
- Please make sure your child has had a recent diaper change and/or has been to the restroom before entering Child Watch.
- Proper dress is required; shoes/booties/socks and shirt required.
- Please do not allow your child to bring items from home such as toys, money, small objects or other items.
- Clearly label all belongings: diaper bags, bottles, pacifiers, etc. The Y is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
- The Child Watch staff reserves the right to ask any parent to remove their child from the Child Watch for just cause.

## FITNESS & WELLNESS CENTER GUIDELINES

The Y strives every day to provide a welcoming place where anyone, from beginning exercisers to competitive athletes, can come to improve their health and well-being. The following health and wellness policies are designed to help ensure the safety and positive experience of all members who use the Y.

- The wellness floor and indoor track is reserved for members and guests age 11 and older.
- Anyone under age 16 must complete a fitness and membership orientation.
- Closed-toe shoes are to be worn at all times.
- Appropriate workout attire is required for all males and females.
- Please be courteous at all times. Unsportsmanlike behavior, profanity or foul language is prohibited.
- Allow others to share equipment while you are resting between sets.
- If dumbbells appear loose or cracked, please report it to a staff member immediately.

- Always use a spotter when attempting maximum weights.
- Do not attempt to repair or adjust any equipment that has malfunctioned.
- Please do not drop or slam down weights.
- Please wipe off equipment and benches after use.
- Report equipment problems immediately to a staff member.
- Please use collars and clips for “free bar” lifting.
- Screaming during lifting is not allowed.
- Please secure all bags and belonging in the locker room.

- Food is not permitted in the Wellness area; only sealed plastic bottles are permitted.
- Please rack all weights and dumbbells after each use.

It is highly recommended that all members participate in and Equipment Orientation. This is a FREE benefit included in your membership. The YMCA offers Personal Training for our facility members. **USE OF NON-YMCA PERSONAL TRAINERS IS PROHIBITED WITHIN OUR FACILITIES.**

## **PERSONAL TRAINING GUIDELINES**

Only staff members employed by the Y are allowed to provide personal training with YMCA facilities and programs. Our staff members are trained and certified by the YMCA (in accordance with the organization’s history and philosophy) and they are committed to carrying out our mission by providing high-quality programs.

Personal trainers who are not employed by the YMCA are strictly prohibited from training or conducting business in a YMCA facility. The YMCA has this standard in order to provide safe, high-quality personal training at all times.

## **AQUATICS**

The Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA’s Pool Policies help ensure that everyone, no matter what age, is provided with a safe environment while participating in our swimming programs.

### **Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA Pool Rules**

- All swimmers under the age of 12 must pass a swim test before they can be in the YMCA pool area without direct adult supervision.
- **SWIM TEST:** Swim the length of the pool (25 yards) and perform a back float in the deep end.
- Children in life jackets must be directly supervised by a parent or legal guardian in the water and within arm’s reach.
- Riding on another person’s shoulders is NOT allowed.
- All swimmers age 8-10 years old who have passed the swim test, may use the pool on their own, however a parent or guardian must be in the facility.

- All swimmers age 11 years or older who have passed the swim test, may use the facility without a parent or legal guardian supervision.
- Children must pass a Swim Test before swimming in the deep end.
- Flotation devices must be USCG APPROVED.
- Children requiring a flotation device must stay in the shallow end.
- All swimmers must shower before entering the pool.
- Bathing suits are required (swim trunks for men and boys, and one or two-piece suits for women and girls.)
- No food, drinks (except water) & glass containers near the pool.
- Diving is not allowed; except during swim team practice with YMCA coach supervision.
- Use ladder one at a time only to enter & exit the pool.
- No running, pushing, or dangerous horseplay.
- Jumping in feet first is allowed. Running & jumping, jumping in backwards, “spinning”, doing flips or being thrown is NOT allowed.
- No extended breath holding.
- The pool will close during any severe or dangerous weather conditions.
- The Lifeguard is in charge of the pool at all times.
- Lifeguards reserve the right to deny use of the pool to anyone violating pool rules.
- All guests must adhere to these rules during YMCA hours of operation.

**If you have any questions about these policies, please contact your local Y.**

## OUR LOCATIONS

### Blossman Family YMCA

1810 Government Street  
Ocean Spring, MS 39564  
228 875 5050

#### Center Hours

Monday-Thursday; 5:00am-10:00pm  
Friday; 5:00am-9:00pm  
Saturday; 7:00am-7:00pm  
Sunday; 11:00am-5:00pm

#### Holiday Hours

**New Year's Day** – All YMCA facilities closed  
**Easter Sunday** – All YMCA facilities closed  
**Thanksgiving Day** – All YMCA facilities closed  
**Christmas Eve** – 5:00 am – 12:00 pm  
No group fitness classes or child watch  
**Christmas Day** – All YMCA facilities closed  
**New Year's Eve** – 5:00 am – 12:00 pm  
No aerobics classes or Child watch

### Tradition Family YMCA

1266 1 Village Avenue West  
Biloxi, MS 39532  
228 831 8749

#### Center Hours

Monday-Thursday; 6:00am-8:00pm  
Friday; 6:00am-8:00pm  
Saturday; 8:00am-12:00pm  
Sunday; Closed

#### Holiday Hours

**New Year's Day** – All YMCA facilities closed  
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TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1810 Government Street  
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[MGCYMCA.ORG](http://MGCYMCA.ORG)