

FAMILY AND YOUTH

HANDBOOK

Updated August 2023

**INTRODUCTION**

At Next Step To Success (NSTS), we believe all youth want to succeed, all youth can succeed, and all youth deserve the opportunity to earn success.

**Our mission is to help youth in Norfolk build the independent, resilient character they will need to earn success and enjoy happy, fulfilling lives as adults.**

NSTS provides structured after–school and full-day summer programs for Norfolk youth, ages 13 –18. Youth who are 18 years old must be in high school. Activities include, but are not limited to boatbuilding, visual and performing arts, academic support, career exploration, mentoring, character education, STEM-skill development, hands-on field trips and much more. We expect our participants to actively participate in our program, which includes working independently in a group setting that is supervised by NSTS staff and/or partnering organizations.

Our youth have tons of fun, but each activity has a purpose, and the fun is planned with an overriding goal in mind. Job 1 is raising personal expectations for what our youth can accomplish. Our goal is to get Norfolk youth ready for their adult years. We do this by raising the bar high for them to so that they can build character skills such as grit, growth mindset, learned optimism, and resilience-- skills they will need to be successful in work and in life.

By surrounding youth with the supports they need, we equip Norfolk teens to achieve success and self-sufficiency not only today, but for many years to come.

NSTS is grounded in a strategy for success called The Success Sequence. The research behind The Success Sequences shows that young people who follow the below three steps are very likely to reach a middle-to-higher income lifestyle as adults.

*The Success Sequence* steps are:

1. Graduate on time from high school
2. Upon graduating from high school, go to college, trade school, the military or obtain full-time employment.
3. Wait for marriage to have children.

To point youth in this direction, NSTS challenges our participants to be open to new opportunities, experiences, and personal relationships. We empower our NSTS youth to take the next and future steps that will build their interests and talents into lifelong skills. In turn, youth will come to believe and demonstrate that they are future Success Stories.

The NSTS’ professional staff are devoted to the highest quality of service and delivery of care to you and your child. Ensuring each participant’s safety is the most important aspect of our program. This means that all youth must be able to participate in a large group setting and work independently on learning activities also in a group setting. If following the program model and NSTS protocols (including safety protocols) is a challenge for youth participants, NSTS leadership will decide whether NSTS can affectively meet their needs and interests. If we cannot meet a youth’s needs or interests, we reserve the right to discharge them from NSTS.

NSTS is not a youth drop-in center: it is a very structured program where youth participate in both on-site and off-site structured, well-planned learning activities. Most children benefit from a structured setting, however there might be some that are looking for an atmosphere where they can mostly socialize and hang out with their friends. While we encourage the youth to develop new friendships, we also expect youth to actively participate in our structured program even when they might not need feel as excited as we are about our learning activities.

We also require every youth to submit and store their cell phones in the NSTS storage locker as soon as they arrive at NSTS. There are no exceptions to this rule. By having time away from their cell phones, youth are better able to focus on the activity they are participating in.

Our interest in your child’s happiness and success does not stop when they “graduate” from our program. We are invested in their futures, and we will be their fiercest advocates in the years to come.

This handbook has been created as a reference guide for families to become more familiar with NSTS procedures and policies. Your child’s safety is our top priority, and we take this responsibility very seriously.

Please review this handbook in its entirety and return the last page (with your signature) to our staff. Your cooperation toward this effort is very important. We look forward to serving you and your child, and we will work extremely hard to make this a positive experience for your entire family. We encourage you to ask questions or seek information at any time from our team members. It will help you and your child get the most out of this program.

**NSTS’ Mantra:**

**All youth want to succeed.**

**All youth can succeed.**

**All youth deserve the opportunity to earn success.**

**General Policies & Procedures**

**Staff Responsibilities**

All youth deserve to have adult role models who are capable, caring, and whose values enable them to be excellent mentors. You will find our staff to be very positive and committed to motivating your children to be their very best.

NSTS participant safety is our #1 priority. We take safety very seriously, which means that our staff must ensure that they can provide a healthy and safe environment for youth in a large group setting. When the safety of any youth or staff is compromised, we may have to remove a youth who cannot participate in NSTS safely in a group setting. Unfortunately, we are unable to tailor NSTS to meet the individual needs and interests of our youth participants.

Our positive youth development philosophy is, “Connection before Correction.” This means that we work extremely hard every day to build and maintain strong, affirming, engaging, and nurturing relationships with each young person (and your family) so that our youth participants have the tools they need to make positive decisions within NSTS and in school, at home, and in their communities.

**REGISTRATION**:

Youth will be accepted regardless of race, sex, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or ancestry. Parents/legal guardians are required to complete the registration process before their child is officially admitted to Next Step to Success.

Space is limited. If the session is filled, your child will be placed on a waitlist for the next session. The waitlist is based on a “first come, first served basis.” If this is the case, parents /legal guardians will receive confirmation of being placed on the wait list.

**AGES OF YOUTH:**

Next Step to Success youth must be between the ages of 13 – 18 (18-year-olds must be in high school) and must be permanent residents of Norfolk to participate.

**NSTS STAFF**:

*Executive Director (Monique Turner-Lopez)*

The Executive Director is the senior leader who oversees Next Step to Success (NSTS) and who also supervises the NSTS Site Manager and the NSTS Community Ambassador. The Executive Director ensures that organizational policies and procedures are followed, and that NSTS objectives and outcomes are being met. The Executive Director reports to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NSTS, Mr. Rob McCartney. Mrs. Turner-Lopez can be reached on her cell phone at 813-373-4738 or via email at [mturner@nextsteptosuccess.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CMonique%20Turner-Lopez%5CDownloads%5Cmturner%40nextsteptosuccess.org).

*Site Manager (Muhanma E. Garcia)*

The Site Manager is the supervisory staff who oversees NSTS daily operations and supervises front-line staff and the Assistant Site Manager. The Site Manager is the individual who is your first point of contact if you have any questions or concerns. Mr. Garcia reports to the Executive Director, Monique Turner-Lopez. Mr. Garcia can be reach on his work cell phone number (757) 404-1818 or via email at mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org.

*Assistant Site Manager (Sierra Alexander)*

The Assistant Site Manager coaches and mentors our Success Coaches. She assists in developing NSTS curriculum, coordinates field trips, and secures educational and enrichment resources. The Assistant Site Manager also facilitates learning activities with youth participants on a regular basis. The Assistant Site Manager reports to the Site Manager, Muhanma Garcia. The Assistant Site Manager is your second point of contact if you have any questions or concerns. Ms. Alexander can be reached at her work cell phone number (757) 677-6050 or via email at salexander@nextsteptosuccess.org.

Parent Responsibilities:

1. Provide accurate and complete information about your child including medical history, needs, interests, and other matters relating to your child’s personality, behavior, special needs (including special education needs) characteristics, health, and overall wellbeing.
2. Ask staff for clarification when you do not understand something about the program (i.e., program hours, field trip locations, bus transportation, food served etc.).
3. Participate in NSTS orientations/open houses and other family-related events.
4. Understand and accept outcomes if you or your child does not follow program rules. The outcome may include, but not limited to discharge from the program, staff assessment of youth returning for future sessions and/or staff referring youth to another program or service that is more appropriate for your child’s needs and/or interests.
5. Follow NSTS’ rules, including, but not limiting to abiding with hours of operation, the dress code, rules for technology use, and other NSTS-related matters.
6. Show mutual respect and consideration to NSTS staff, other youth, other families, partners, volunteers, guests, and location’s property/equipment/buildings/grounds, as well as the property that belongs to other individuals.

**NSTS Address:**

Next Step To Success is located at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 6400 Newport Avenue, Norfolk Virginia 23505. Please note that several NSTS activities take place at our partners’ offsite offices, and at outdoor and indoor spaces located throughout the city of Norfolk and the Hampton Roads area.

**NSTS HOURS:**

***Summer Session-*** 9:00am -3:00pm, Monday -Friday

***Fall/Spring After School Sessions*** – 2:30pm – 6:30pm, Monday - Friday

NSTS follows Norfolk Public Schools' calendar as well as the calendar of our site location. If school is closed, NSTS is closed. If there is a half day or an asynchronistic day of school, NSTS is closed. NSTS will not be open during inclement weather when the schools or the church (Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church) are closing early.

**Please note: If** you drop-off or pick-up your child directly to or from the NSTS program location, parents / legal guardians must drop off their child by 3:30pm and pick them up by 6:00pm during fall /spring session. For the summer session, youth must arrive by 9:00am and be picked up by 4:00pm. If you are running late, please contact the Site Manager at (757) 404-1818 to inform him/her of this change.

**AFTER HOURS CONTACT:**

Summer: 4:30pm -6:00pm (Monday- Friday)

Fall / Spring: 6:30pm – 7:00pm (Monday – Friday)

**Please note that calls made to NSTS staff after business hours or on the weekends may not be returned until the following business day.**

**ATTENDANCE / DISMISSAL**

Next Step to Success will collect daily attendance for the purposes of ensuring that your child is fully engaged in the program. If staff note a pattern of absenteeism, parent / legal guardian will be informed accordingly. Youth who show a pattern of absenteeism

Youth attendance to NSTS is extremely important. Your “payment” is not a financial one but the commitment that you and your child make to be active, engaged (meaning - interested in the program and our activities) participants. We expect your child to attend NSTS every day and cooperate with program rules, behavior policies, and activities. *Early pick-ups should be limited*. Failure to fully participate could result in your child losing his/her spot in the program.

What we ask of each youth in the program for their “payment” is a commitment to do the following as a member of Next Step To Success. The following is what we ask of each youth to participate in NSTS:

**Show up!**

**Show up regularly!**

**Be Kind!**

**Do Your Best!**

**Have Fun!**

Safety is always our top concern. If we feel that a youth cannot participate safely in NSTS under our program model, then NSTS leadership may have to dismiss this youth from the program.

For parents, we ask that you attend all scheduled parent meetings, parent workshops, and family night events. Failure to adhere to NSTS rules, attendance policies, behavior policies, or instructions given by the Site Manager and/or NSTS staff could result in immediate removal from the program.

**Late Pickup**

If you have opted to personally transport your child to the program, please be aware of our attendance policy and drop-off and pick-up requirements. If a parent / legal guardian is late for pick up, program staff will contact you 30 minutes post dismissal. If parent / legal guardian cannot be reached program, staff will call identified emergency contacts provided. If you or your emergency contact(s) have failed to pick up your child after one hour after the program has ended, we will contact the local authorities for their support and intervention.

If your child is not picked up by closing time, staff has been instructed to:

1) Attempt to contact you.

2) Attempt to contact individuals listed as emergency contacts.

3) After **1 hour** and unsuccessful attempts to reach you and emergency contacts, the Norfolk Police Department will be notified.

4) We are not allowed to drive any child home in personal vehicles.

**Children At Risk**

Parents who arrive at NSTS in an incapacitated condition (i.e., alcohol, drugs) present a risk to their child. The staff in charge will advise the parents of their options regarding the transportation of their child to his/her home. Some options that may be exercised are:

* Call another person on the child’s emergency contact list.
* Call the other parent.
* Call a taxi or a rideshare service.
* Call a nearby neighbor/friend.

If a reasonable conclusion cannot be reached, the parent will be advised that staff will contact the local police department and/or child protective services.

**ABSENCE**

If your child does not attend NSTS on a scheduled day due to illness or other circumstances, please contact the Site Manager. You can reach the Site Manager at 757-404-1818. This is especially important on field trip days and if illness symptoms are due to Covid-19 or other communicable diseases.

We do understand emergencies arise; however, we are responsible for your children during the program hours and a brief message saves us all a great deal of time and worry.

Youth who do not attend the program regularly may not be allowed to go on scheduled field trips.

**SNOW AND INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Snow and Inclement Weather may necessitate our calling you to pick up your child early or have your child dropped off by one of our NSTS vans early**. Two hours’ notice will be given when possible**. Your cooperation will enable everyone to get home safely.

**NSTS follows the Norfolk Public School System’s snow and inclement weather policy.** Please listen to local radio and television news stations for announcements. You may also call the program or your child’s school to find out if your child’s school is closed or closing early due to inclement weather.

**NSTS CLOSURES AND HOLIDAYS**

NSTS follows the Norfolk Public School System schedule and is also closed for scheduled holidays and staff breaks. The NSTS yearly calendar is located in the back of this handbook. Please review this calendar so that you know when NSTS is closed.

**MEALS AND SNACKS**

During the summer, breakfast, a snack, and lunch will be provided daily for free during NSTS Summer camp. During the fall and spring, NSTS will provide a free snack and dinner. NSTS will make every effort to provide meals and snacks that consist of healthy nutritious foods and drink.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

The program is designed to assist all children with building such skills as decision-making, grit, resilience, problem-solving, teamwork, growth mindset, learning optimism and other skills that will help your child have a successful transition into their young adult years. Examples of such activities include:

* Rotating enrichment and leadership development clubs
* Activities which strengthen social and emotional learning
* Cooking, gardening, and special activities such as “Explore Hampton Roads.”
* College awareness workshops and college tours
* Science, aviation, and trade industry-related, hands-on workshops
* Structured game-based activities.
* Visual art, modern dance, and other enrichment classes
* Educational and culture-enrichment field trips
* Career and job readiness workshops
* Outdoor sports
* Guest speaker assemblies

**NSTS leadership and staff reserve the right to change the NSTS schedule, assigned groups of youth, and/or activities.**

**FIELD TRIPS**

Whenever possible, free field trips will be planned for students to participate in. You will be notified in advance and provided with a permission slip to sign, which will include the details of the trip. NSTS will provide transportation for agency-sponsored field trips.

**In supervising field trips:**

* NSTS will provide adequate staff members to ensure all children will be always supervised (in a group setting) while on the field trip. Our group ratio is typically 1 staff member to 15 youth.
* Your child is expected to wear the Center’s Identification badge and/or the NSTS shirt on all trips.
* Your child must always stay with the group, abide by his/her signed letter of commitment, and follow program guidelines.
* While on the bus or van in route to an activity, children are to keep their arms, legs, and head inside the vehicle until they disembark. Passengers must always remain seated with their seatbelts on.
* Staff members will routinely take attendance to account for all youth on the trip.

**HEALTH GUIDELINES**

**Your child must not attend the program if he/she:**

* Has a temperature of/above 101 degrees.
* Has a communicable disease, has symptoms of Covid-19 and/or has tested positive for Covid-19.
* Has discharge from the eyes or ears, diarrhea, vomiting or rash.
* Has not waited the required number of days following diagnosis and treatment. Children can only return to the program with a doctor’s note.
* Is unable to participate in program activities due to health concerns.

**A child may return when:**

* Fever has been absent for 24 hours.
* Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea has subsided, and all functions return to normal.
* Stages of contagion have passed for communicable disease.
* Has followed the CDC guidelines if exposed to COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19.
* Has submitted a doctor’s note to the Site Manager.

**ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES:**

In the event of a non-emergent accident, first aid will be administered to your child. In the event of an emergency, NSTS staff will call 911 and contact the parent/legal guardian immediately to inform them of the situation and where their child is being provided with medical attention. If staff are unable to reach the parent/legal guardian, they will reach out to the emergency contacts provided on the Emergency Medical Form completed during registration.

**Emergency Situations**

* NSTS staff members are trained and certified in CPR and First Aid.
* You may be called for minor bruises and or cuts.
* All pertinent data and health information will be transported with the child.
* An incident report for any incident/injury will be completed.
* A copy will be kept on file when any of the following occur:
* An illness, accident or injury that requires first aid treatment; or
* A bump or blow to the head; or
* Emergency transporting; or
* An unusual or unexpected event, which jeopardizes the safety of the children or staff, occurs.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS and TECHNOLOGY**

Your child should not bring valuable electronics to the program (i.e., hand-held video games such as the Nintendo switch, tablets, laptops, earphones, Chromebooks, or portable speakers).

Participants’ cell phones are immediately stored in the NSTS locker upon youth arriving to the program. There are no exceptions. If your child needs to contact you by phone, they may use the Site Manager’s company cell phone.

If you need to reach your child, please call 757-404-1818 to speak with your child.

NSTS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.

**Parent/Guardian Participation and Responsibilities**

Parents are the most significant adults in a child’s life. In order for our program to be successful, we need your input. Therefore, NSTS parent meetings are **mandatory**. \* We also ask that you attend all parent workshops and family night events as scheduled throughout the year.

 Maintaining communication is an important part of each staff member’s responsibility. Your input is important to us. Feel free to communicate often with our staff to enable us to provide the best assistance for your child. We seek your active involvement in our program and view you as our #1 partner.

*\*Parents may send a family representative over the age of 18 in their place to the meeting if unable to attend.*

**PARENT NOTICES**

We will regularly call, email, or text parents regarding information on your child’s engagement in NSTS, specific activities, upcoming field trips, parent meetings and other news items.

**INFORMATION UPDATES**

We will periodically ask you to update the information in your file (i.e., home address, phone number, authorized emergency contacts, etc.) to ensure that our records are always current. Please report any information changes to us as soon as possible. We ask that this information be shared with us in writing. All information remains confidential except for information that we have your written permission to share.

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS AND GRADE REPORT CARDS**

NSTS is committed to helping your child be successful in their academic studies. To do so, we ask that you provide up-to-date and regular copies of your child’s grade report cards as soon as possible. By having this information, our staff can help your child strengthen their academic skills and track their progress in their daytime studies. Please note that we do not offer academic assistance during the summer camp.

**YOUTH DRESS CODE POLICY**

At Next Step To Success, we are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all of our youth participants. Our dress code policy is designed to promote a respectful and focused atmosphere that aligns with our values and goals. We believe that appropriate attire plays a crucial role in creating a positive learning and social experience. We kindly request all youth participants and their guardians to adhere to the following dress code guidelines:

**General Guidelines:**

1. **Appropriateness:** Clothing should be modest and suitable for a learning and social environment. Outfits that are excessively revealing, provocative, or offensive are not allowed.
2. **Safety:** Footwear that provides adequate support and protection is always required. Open-toed shoes, flip-flops, and high heels are discouraged due to safety concerns.

**Prohibited Attire:**

1. **Hair Bonnets and Du-Rags:** Hair bonnets and du-rags are not permitted within our premises. We encourage participants to style their hair in a way that is respectful and contributes to a professional atmosphere.
2. **Inappropriate Messages or Symbols:** Clothing with messages, symbols, or images that promote hate speech, discrimination, violence, profanity, or explicit content is strictly prohibited.
3. **Gang Messages or Signs:** Wearing clothing that displays gang-related messages, signs, or colors is not allowed. Our goal is to provide a safe and neutral environment for all participants.

**Dress Code Enforcement:**

1. **Initial Reminders:** If a participant arrives wearing attire that violates the dress code policy, our staff will provide a friendly reminder of the guidelines and offer assistance if necessary.
2. **Providing Alternatives:** In cases where a participant's attire does not comply with the policy, we will work with them and their guardians to find suitable alternatives, if available.
3. **Repeated Offenses:** If a participant repeatedly violates the dress code policy, our team will have a conversation with their guardians to address the issue and find a solution that ensures a respectful environment for everyone.

**Dress Code Communication:** We understand that adhering to the dress code policy is a collaborative effort between participants, their guardians, and our organization. We will ensure that the policy is communicated clearly and effectively to all youth participants and their guardians through our website, informational materials, and in-person meetings.

**BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

At Next Step to Success, we expect behavior from all staff, guests, family members, partnering organizations, and youth to be **respectful, responsible,** and **saf**e. Youth are also asked to follow behavior expectations and sign a letter of commitment (located at the end of this handbook) as our goal is to provide an environment where all youth can feel safe, build positive, lasting relationships, and explore their growth.

Please review the following with your child:

1. Fighting is prohibited.
2. Bullying is prohibited.
3. Sexual misconduct including inappropriate photos, text, and email messages is prohibited.
4. Sexual Harassment – including soliciting any form of physical or sexual behavior or actions from others is prohibited.
5. Respecting each participant and staff member’s personal space and property.
6. Profanity/Use of Bad or Inappropriate Language is Prohibited
7. Theft of Property is Prohibited
8. Weapons or anything that can be used as a weapon are prohibited.
9. Possession or Use of Weapons is Prohibited
10. Smoking, vaping, and/or the use of substances or alcohol is prohibited.
11. Parents are responsible for the actions of their child(ren) or you/affiliated parties are liable for

any damaged property, windows, equipment, etc.

1. Youth are to be respectful of other youth, NSTS staff, church staff, other parents, partnering agencies, guest speakers, visitors, and volunteers.
2. Youth are to always remain with the program and at our location with staff (in the line of sight of NSTS staff). While participating in an NSTS field trip or excursion, youth must always remain with NSTS, their assigned group, and within the line of sight of NSTS staff and/or partners.
3. Unless approved by NSTS staff, there is no eating or drinking in company vehicles.
4. Participants must follow NSTS transportation protocols which will ensure their safety. This includes that youth must always wear their seatbelts when in NSTS vehicles.

All NSTS rules apply during program hours including when youth are transported in company vehicles.

***NSTS staff advocates a safe and nurturing environment for all our youth participants and will not allow the actions of one participant to infringe on the safety of other youth.***

**MANDATED REPORTERS**

Under the guidelines set by the state of Virginia, NSTS and its staff have the legal responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of the children enrolled in our program. In doing so, we are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. It is our responsibility to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect, should we witness and/or become aware of any possible cases.

NSTS, its programs and staff retain responsibilities to protect children enrolled in NSTS should there be allegations of abuse and/or neglect. This includes notification to parents/guardians if there is an allegation of abuse/neglect from a staff member and/or volunteer, as well as our zero-tolerance policy should there be an allegation that a staff member/volunteer abused or neglected a child.

**Discipline**

Discipline consists of offering guidance and positive reinforcement. In the case of a behavioral issue, a child may be given a break by the Site Manager or Assistant Site Manager. Our goals are to build strong, empowering, and nurturing relationships with each youth and to guide him or her to constructive engagement.

The staff reinforces positive behavior choices to reinforce acceptable behaviors. In a case of a disciplinary problem, a conference with the parents/legal guardians may be requested. Problematic behaviors (such as profanity, theft, fighting, bullying, or other negative or unsafe behaviors) can be disruptive in the program and put everyone’s safety at risk.

The staff and parents can usually work together to mutually resolve the problem; however, problems that are not corrected may result in your child being removed from NSTS.

**Termination of Services**

Cause for terminationincludes, but is not limited to:

* Behavior that cannot be mutually resolved by staff and parents which can potentially jeopardize the welfare of your child, other children, or staff.
* Failure to follow program policies, rules, and expectations.

**Complaint Procedure**

The complaint procedure is your vehicle to make your concerns known. Please do not hesitate to follow the recommended guidelines in the order listed below:

1. Talk with your child to find out the nature of the concern, whether it is staff or peer related.
2. Discuss your concerns with the Site Manager.
3. NEVER confront staff in front of children. Always ask to speak to staff in private. Keep in mind that staff may not leave youth unattended.
4. Never confront other children or parents about your concerns. Let the Site Manager assist you in handling the matter in the most effective way possible.
5. If you are not satisfied with the way the matter was handled by the Site Manager, you may contact the Executive Director, Monique Turner-Lopez, at 813-373-4738.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Next Step to Success will maintain confidentiality and respect each family’s right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of any confidential information. Your child’s personal information (e.g., the NSTS application form) is securely stored and only accessible to NSTS staff who are working with your child. However, if we have reason to believe that your child’s welfare may be at risk, we are bound by the law to share confidential information within Virginia state mandates and to necessary agencies (such as the local authorities) or individuals, who may intervene on behalf of your child.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Staff Name Title Cell Phone Email Address**

Muhanma Garcia Site Manager 757-404-1818 mgarcia@nextsteptosuccess.org

Sierra Alexander Assistant Site Manager 757-677-6050 salexander@nextsteptosuccess.org

Monique Turner-Lopez Executive Director 813-373-4738 mturner@nextsteptosuccess.org

Email: info@nextsteptosuccess.org

**Physical Address of NSTS**

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

6400 Newport Avenue

Norfolk, VA 23505

**POLICY CHANGES**

This handbook was written for parents/guardians and youth participants to promote an understanding of the most current policies and procedures.

NSTS reserves the right to modify or change policies and procedures in this handbook at any time.

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**Youth Participant Commitment Agreement**

As a “Success Story,” a participant of Next Step To Success, I believe that:

*All youth can succeed.*

*All youth want to Succeed.*

*And all youth deserve the opportunity to earn success.*

I want to earn success and by signing this letter, I will make a commitment to my current and future success by:

1. Attending Next Step To Success regularly: I will attend at least three days each week of every week of the afterschool program. If I am a participant of the summer program, I will attend at least four days a week of each week of the program.
2. Doing my best: I will work on at least one hard thing/goal in NSTS and follow through with it. If I sign up for an activity, I will not drop out. I will finish the learning activity’s entire program until it has completely ended. I understand that participating in NSTS is very important to my success and to becoming a grittier person who is resilient, reliable, and has a grown mindset.
3. Setting new goals and achieving them: I will participate in individual and group coaching sessions led by NSTS staff and partners. I will create my own personal action plan.
4. Being kind and respectful to my peers, NSTS staff, NSTS volunteers, visitors, and other organizations staff/volunteers: I will respect other people’s personal and emotional space and boundaries.
5. Committing to having fun in a healthy, safe, and respectful manner: I enjoy having fun, and will do so in a safe, healthy, and respectful way.
6. Turning in my cellphone and other electronics to the NSTS at the start of each day of the program: I understand that I will receive my personal belongings, including my cell phone, back at the end of the day.
7. Seeking guidance, advice and/or support from NSTS staff: I understand that NSTS staff are here to support me, help me achieve my goals, and be the best version of myself that I can be.
8. Being positive and practicing learned optimism as I know I am building my growth mindset and grit: While I know it is hard at times, I will do my best to remain positive and understand that this is a necessary part of learning. I am committed to my happiness and in having a positive attitude.

Because I want to succeed in life and at NSTS, I will apply the above commitments while I am a member of NSTS. I understand that the ultimate responsibility for succeeding is in my control. I commit 100%. I also understand and agree that if I do not follow what I committed to in this letter, I will risk losing my membership in Next Step To Success.

**Youth’s Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Youth’s Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NSTS Staff Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**



**Parent/Legal Guardian Sign-Off Sheet**

My child and I have participated in the NSTS Open House/Orientation on (date)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Based on my signature below and that of my child, I acknowledge that my child and I have learned about the NSTS policies and procedures, and we understand these policies and procedures. In addition, based on our signatures below, I have received and reviewed all the above written information outlined in the program handbook.

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent/Guardian Name *(please print)***  **Parent/Guardian Signature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Youth’s Name *(please print)***  **Youth’s Signature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Additional Children Enrolled**

**Youth’s Name *(please*** ***print)*** **Youth’s Signature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Youth’s Name *(please*** ***print)*** **Youth’s Signature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Youth’s Name *(please*** ***print)*** **Youth’sSignature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Youth’s Name *(please*** ***print)*** **Youth’sSignature / Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE** **BELOW THIS LINE.**

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| --- |
| **NSTS Staff Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |