

City of Meriden

Max E. Muravnick
Meriden Senior Center
Participant Handbook

2017



Our Mission: To provide seniors in our community with a safe and welcoming space where seniors can gain access to information and programs that enhance their quality of life.

Welcome to the Meriden Senior Center! This handbook is a guide to our Center’s guidelines and policies for all participants. If you have any questions regarding anything in this manual, please do not hesitate to ask a staff person.

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I. Hours of Operation

The Meriden Senior Center is open to participants from 8:30am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. Staff will answer phones starting at 8:30am. We are closed on all major holidays including:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

Presidents Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Doors are unlocked at 8:30am and locked for the day at 4:00pm; participants must leave the building no later than 3:50pm. Occasional evening and weekend programs may be scheduled.

II. Senior Center Closures

The Senior Center follows the Board of Education closure/delay policies. If Meriden Schools are closed due to snow, the Senior Center will be open but we will **not** offer any programs, transportation or lunch. In this event "Meriden Senior Center - No Activities" and "Meriden Senior Center - No Transportation" will be posted on WFSB Channel 3. Updates and information will also be available on the city website – www.meridenct.gov - during events that require prolonged closure of our center.

III. Senior Center Membership Eligibility

Those wishing to use Senior Center services must register as participants. Meriden residents age 55+ can join the Senior Center and participate in activities on a drop-in basis. Current participants who move outside of Meriden are allowed to continue to participate in all activities but will **not** be eligible for mini-bus transportation or social services. Non-residents will be charged an annual fee of \$20.00 in January.

Applications are available in the front office. There is currently no charge to become a participant of the Meriden Senior Center. Membership must be renewed and updated on a bi-annual basis during the month of January. On occasion the Senior Center may have events where people under 55 years old are invited; this invitation will be included in program announcements.

Only participants with current registrations are allowed to partake in Senior Center activities. Participants must sign in at the front or back desk upon entering the Senior Center and before participating in any activities. Participants of specific classes must sign their name and member I.D. number on class attendance sheets provided by the instructors. This is a safety measure so staff is aware of who is in the building. This also allows us to track how many seniors we serve.

IV. Privacy Policy

The Meriden Senior Center has implemented procedures to protect your privacy in accordance with State laws. All records are confidential and maintained accordingly.

V. Eligibility and Participation

The Senior Center is accessible for people with disabilities. Our programs are designed for Meriden residents age 55+.

The Senior Center Administrator and Department of Health staff reserves the right to assess the ability of potential members to safely and appropriately use the Senior Center. This is to insure the health and well-being of all attendees.

Members must be independent and oriented; Senior Center staff members are not allowed to provide hands-on assistance.

At the discretion of the Senior Center Administrator a member may be required to have a home health aide, companion, escort or family member accompany them for his/her participation in Center activities or utilization of mini-bus transportation services.

Members requiring an aide or companion to participate must be accompanied by them at all times while at the Center. In the event the aide or companion does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the member at the Center unassisted Senior Center staff will immediately contact the emergency contact person on file. If the contact person is unavailable the Meriden Police Department may be called.

Individuals with problems that cannot be managed by their aide or companion will be excluded from participation. These problems include, but are not limited to:

Wandering	Chronic unmanageable incontinence
Prescription drug monitoring	Chronic contagious disease
Drug or alcohol abuse	Abusive or harmful behavior
Regularly occurring seizures	Cognitive impairment
Poor personal hygiene	Behavioral health problems
Inability to feed oneself	Inability to toilet independently

Prior to exclusion for any of the above reasons the Senior Center Administrator shall meet with the individual and/or their family to express his/her concerns and possible solutions. A plan of action will be agreed to by all parties; failure to comply will result in exclusion from the Senior Center and cancellation of member privileges.

VI. Copy, Fax Machines, Phone, and Public Use of Computers

- a. A member copy machine is available for limited copying at a cost of \$.10/page in the front office.
- b. Faxing is permitted by an authorized staff for the member at a cost of \$.25/page
- c. Persons using the Senior Center's printers are to use computer paper only in the printers at a cost of \$.05/page
- d. Pornographic images, whether obscene or not, may not be displayed on PC's or laptops in the Senior Center. Illegal use of the Senior Center's computers will be reported to enforcement authorities.
- e. There is no public phone in the Senior Center.

VII. Health and Safety

As a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Meriden Senior Center takes the health, safety, and well-being of our participants very seriously. Senior Center staff are not responsible for any member entering or leaving the Center with other members or alone. Staff is also not responsible for any belongings or items that a patron brings into our Center.

- a. **Tobacco Use:** The Meriden Senior Center is a tobacco-free facility. No tobacco use is allowed inside or outside the front door of our building, or on our mini-buses. This includes use of cigarettes, E-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, cigars, cigarillos, or any other tobacco product. Smoking is permitted in a designated area on the Hanover side of the building. In order to maintain a litter-free campus, we ask that cigarette and cigar butts be properly disposed of in designated containers.
- b. **Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages are not permitted within the building or on the grounds. If a participant is found to be in possession of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol while inside the Senior Center the Meriden Police will be called and the individual will be banned from the Center.
- c. **Hand Sanitizer:** Participants are encouraged to use the waterless hand sanitizers located throughout the facility. If you are ill or have a fever seek medical attention and remain at home.
- d. **Pets:** Pets are not permitted inside the facility except during approved programs or with prior written consent of the Senior Affairs Administrator. Service pets are allowed with proper documentation.
- e. **Food and Beverages:** Food and beverages are not permitted in rooms with carpet. A staff member may grant prior approval for food in other areas. The Meriden Senior

Center is a licensed food service establishment; for the safety of all and to comply with Federal and local health codes:

- I. Only staff members and registered food service volunteers are allowed in the kitchen area.
 - II. Participants are not allowed to remove food that is prepared in the Center from the building.
 - III. A staff member with QFO (Qualified Food Operator) certification oversees all food service operations and enforcement of regulations.
- f. Fire Drills: Fire drills are conducted periodically. Everyone that is in the building when the fire alarm goes off must leave the building. Authorized personnel will deem when it is appropriate to re-enter the building after a fire drill.
- g. Emergency Contact Information: All Senior Center participants must have current emergency contact information on file in the office. In the event that emergency contact information changes it is up to the participant to notify the main office within 48 hours so that files may be updated.

VIII. Emergencies:

In the event of an emergency staff will call 911 and notify the senior's emergency contact on file. Under no circumstances will a staff member transport anyone requiring medical assistance to a hospital or doctor's office for emergency situations.

- a. The Senior Center has 2 AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) on site. The staff is trained in American Heart Association HeartSaver basic first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) every 2 years.
- b. Senior Center participants should not provide any medical assistance to those with a medical emergency or that have fallen. Members must alert staff immediately if someone is having a medical emergency or has fallen.
- c. Members who are fully conscious may refuse medical assistance only after the medics have arrived and their medical condition has been evaluated. If further medical treatment is recommended by the medics and the member refuses to cooperate, a waiver must be signed. Members who refuse the recommended medical attention must immediately vacate the premises and will not be transported by the Senior Center mini-buses or any staff member. The member cannot stay at the Center for the remainder of the day; the emergency contact person or designee will be responsible for transporting the participant and ensuring their well-being.

IX. Personal Conduct

The City of Meriden enforces a zero tolerance policy of harassment and violence in all public buildings. Participants or the general public who do not adhere to this policy will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the violator refuses to leave the premises the Meriden Police will be called. All incidents of harassment of staff will be reported to the Personnel Department.

- a. Persons creating a serious disruption may be asked to leave the Senior Center by a member of the staff. If the person does not leave voluntarily, staff will contact the Meriden Police Department.
- b. For the health, safety and well-being of all participants and staff, the Senior Center Administrator may exclude any person who repeatedly and intentionally does not follow the personal conduct policies. Actions leading to exclusion include, but are not limited to:
- c. Intentionally damaging equipment or damaging property of the senior center including writing on walls, doors, etc.
- d. Repeatedly and intentionally disobeying rules and regulations as outlined in this handbook.
- e. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person (except in self-defense).
- f. Using obscene or profane language, gestures, bullying, or verbally abusing and/or harassing other members or staff.
- g. Carrying a dangerous object, firearm, knife, etc.
- h. Intoxication.
- i. Possession or use of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages.
- j. Sexual harassment of a verbal, written, or physical nature.
- k. Hollering loudly at other persons, seniors or staff.

X. DISRUPTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Disruptive participants are those whose behavior, personal conducts, or physical condition interferes with the smooth functioning of the center or the well-being of its members. Profiled, below, are several categories of disruptive participants. Disruptive participants should be reported to the center manager. All incidents of disruptive behavior should be thoroughly documented by the staff person(s) involved.

- a. Disruptive participants will be denied admittance and/or asked to leave when identified.
- b. Improper conduct: This refers to persons acting out disruptive behavior, verbal or physical aggression, sexual harassment, stalking, profanity, drinking or obvious intoxication, possessing alcoholic beverages or unauthorized substances in the center.
- c. Deteriorated personal hygiene: This is noticeable in persons, whose body or clothing is dirty and/or has an offensive odor; or other prevailing conditions, resulting from personal sanitation problems (e.g., body lice, untreated open wounds, contagious diseases, incontinence, etc.).
- d. Security risks: Refers to persons who steal from other participants or the center in general, or present a clear and present danger to center participants, staff or volunteers.

- e. **Combative Participants:** Should a participant refuse to leave the center, per previously mentioned bullets, when so directed; staff will not attempt to physically remove the participant but call 911 for police assistance.
- f. **Assessment/Resolution:** Center managers should assess the situation and determine a course of action consistent with the behavior.
- g. This may include a referral to the appropriate organization or agency; assigning a staff person to assist the client in altering his/her behavior; contacting the participant's family or caregiver; etc.
- h. If, despite all staff efforts, participants continue to be disruptive, their cases will be reviewed by appropriate Department of Aging & Disabilities staff, after which a decision may be reached to terminate membership at the center.

XI. Complaint Process

The Meriden Senior Center has an open door policy. Participants having concerns about programming, policies, or who are involved in a dispute at the Center are encouraged to first discuss the issue in private with the Administrator or a staff member who will bring it to the attention of the Administrator. All personnel matters are handled by the Administrator, Director of Public Health, and Director of Personnel.

Participants' input is welcomed by all staff members. In addition a locked comment box is located outside the Front Office and participants are encouraged to submit their comments.

XII. Parking

Parking, including handicapped parking spaces, for all participants and visitors of the Senior Center is on a first-come, first-served basis. The main parking lot is on Hanover Street behind the Senior Center.

XIII. Visitors and Solicitations

Soliciting, selling, or collecting money or other items within the Senior Center is not permitted unless it is part of a fundraising project or event sponsored or approved by the Senior Center.

Posters advertising events of outside organizations are allowed on the bulletin board only with the pre-approval of a staff member on the "community bulletin board". We will not make copies of posters and/or flyers.

Informal visits by candidates for public office and distribution of political literature are allowed by scheduling in advance with the Senior Affairs Administrator. Candidates may speak informally to individuals. Each candidate may visit once during a campaign. Petitions

of a legislative nature may be circulated only after notifying the Senior Affairs Administrator of the petition.

XIV. Recreation

Numerous activities, trips, social events, volunteering, exercise classes and clubs are organized by our Recreation Coordinator. Our programs greatly improve the health and well being of the members of our senior center. Most activities take place at the Senior Center although some may take place off site. Seniors are encouraged to register for programs in the main office. Most activities and programs are free or have a small fee.

a. Travel Trips:

Cost: Mini-bus trips, day trips, coach bus trips, overnight trips and cruises can incur a cost. Trip prices are posted on all flyers and inside the monthly newsletter. All payments should be made by either cash or check and are due before the trip takes place.

Mini bus trips are limited to the number of seats on the mini bus (16). Members are typically welcome to drive on their own. Signups for mini bus trips and programs start on the first work day of each month. Numbers will be given out on a first come first serve bases at the front desk. You must be present when your number is called. Walk in signups start at 10:00am, phone sign ups start at 11:00 am. Mini-Bus trip payments are due at least 24 hours before the trip takes place

Extended day trips and overnight trips through travel groups are available for signup as soon as the trip is advertised. Please check the travel board and front office for trip flyers. Not all extended trips will be escorted. Trips will be cancelled due to inclement weather at the discretion of the travel group or travel leader. Payments for all trips are due at least 30 days before the trip. Deadlines for payments will be posted on trip flyers and in the newsletter.

b. Senior Volunteers:

Members are welcome to volunteer at the Center. Volunteers can assist with crafts, decorating, bingo, hosting the greeting desk, assisting with the lunch service and so much more. We provide training, support and lots of appreciation. We ask that seniors who are interested in volunteering schedule time with the Recreation Coordinator to complete the volunteer application.

c. Student Volunteers:

We only accept Meriden Board of Education students needing volunteer hours for school. All student volunteers must present a note from their school before starting their volunteer hours. Students are asked to commit to a set schedule. Students are

required to sign in and out at the front office with the Recreation Coordinator. For the safety of our members we do not accept court mandated volunteers.

XV. Social Services

Social Services provides assistance to increase the quality of life for Meriden residents by ensuring that their basic needs are met. Our Social Services Worker is a CHOICES certified counselor and is able to provide information to persons age 60 or older and clients with disabilities regarding health insurance assistance, counseling, and eligibility screening. If you have any questions, or would like to make an appointment, please call 203-630-4273.

Services offered to clients include:

- a. Referrals to social services agencies for food assistance, energy/fuel assistance, protective services for the elderly, legal aid along with many other agencies and programs
- b. Health insurance assistance
- c. Medicare enrollment and counseling
- d. Medicare Savings Program application assistance
- e. SAGA/TFA application assistance
- f. SNAP application assistance
- g. Renter's Rebate assistance during the eligibility period (April—October)
- h. Assurance/Safelink Application assistance
- i. Assistance finding providers
- j. Assistance with housing applications
- k. Assistance with obtaining eye glasses for uninsured clients

XVI. Elderly Nutrition Program

The Elderly Nutrition Program is a federally funded meal program funded in part by donations. Meals are served Monday through Friday at 11:00am except for when the Senior Center is closed. Seniors are welcome to sign up for a meal by noon the day before by calling 203-235-8052. Extra meals cannot be ordered.

If seniors do not sign up for a meal they have to wait for a cancellation. If a senior needs to cancel their lunch order, please call 203-235-8052 as soon as possible so a meal can be provided to someone on the wait list.

A Form 5 must be filled out when a senior comes in for their first lunch, and must be updated yearly after that. The price for any senior under 60 is \$5.70 and for seniors 60+ the suggested donation for each meal is \$3.00.

XVII. Senior Transportation Services

The Mini-Bus Transportation Program serves Meriden residents 55 and older. The program also provides transportation for people under age 55 who meet the eligibility of the enrollment form. Applications and a Medical Release Form are available in the Transportation office inside the Meriden Senior Center. The application and the release form must be completed, signed by a doctor and returned to the Senior Center Mini-Bus Office or mailed to the Senior Center. The Transportation/Mini-Bus phone number is 203-237-3338.

The Mini-Bus program is a curb to curb service. This means that passengers must be able to enter and exit their home on their own or with the assistance of an escort provided by the passenger. Our drivers cannot assist individuals in or out of their homes. Drivers will assist passengers in wheelchairs onto the lift and into the bus. Passengers with wheelchairs must be accompanied by an aide. All wheelchairs must have a lap belt. Drivers will secure wheelchairs. Vehicles are not available for emergency medical transportation.

a. Hours of Operation

Mini-Bus Transportation office hours are from 8:00am to 3:30pm. The transportation system runs from 8:30am-3:30pm, Monday - Friday. The Administrator must approve use of vehicles for hours other than above.

b. Mini-Bus Eligibility

Mini-Bus Transportation may be used by any Meriden resident who is aged 55 or older or who is an adult with a disability in accordance with the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990. Residents wishing to use the service must complete an enrollment form prior to riding. Once approved, passengers will be registered with the service for two years. Participants must update contact information in the transportation office. If staff determines that Mini-Bus Service is not appropriate the senior will be referred to alternative transportation.

There is no fee for this service which is supported by funding from the City of Meriden, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut. Donations toward the cost of this service are gratefully accepted. Donations can be given to the driver or the Transportation Coordinator. Tipping of drivers is not allowed.

c. Priority of Destinations

- i. Destinations within the City of Meriden, in order of priority, include:
 1. Medical appointments

2. To and from the Senior Center for nutrition or other programs
3. Grocery Shopping (scheduled days only)
4. To and from Public Service Agencies
5. Banking, Pharmacy
6. Other shopping (scheduled days only)

d. **Passenger Expectations**

In order to provide a safe, efficient service, passengers are required to abide by the rules and guidelines of Senior Transportation. Failure to do so may result in a loss of service. Drivers will not make exceptions to these rules.

Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance by calling 203-237-3338 or stopping in the Mini-Bus Office. Reservation hours during office hours are (8:00am–3:30pm). Please notify the dispatcher of cancellations by 8:30am. Reservations must be made on a weekly basis, every week, and permanent ride reservations are not allowed. Reservations or cancellations cannot be made with the drivers.

Medical Transportation Reservations must be made at least 5 days prior to the scheduled appointment. Appointments must be between the hours of 9:30am - 2:00pm. You must be ready for a return ride home by 3:00pm.

Every effort will be made to accommodate an individual's appointment. Service may be denied if the schedule is full, the appointment is not within our operating hours or service area, or if the individual needs hands on assistance. Remember that this mini-bus service is designed to promote mass transportation as well as to meet individual needs. Therefore, the public must be flexible when requesting a specific time for a ride.

Passengers must be ready at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger is not curbside, the mini-bus driver will honk the horn twice and wait only five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

For grocery shopping transportation, passengers are limited to the number of bags that they can safely carry in one trip on and off the bus, so as not to delay the other passengers. **Two bags** are the recommended number of bags for each person. The driver will notify the passengers of the pick-up time when they arrive at the grocery store and passengers must complete their shopping before the scheduled pick-up. The bus must leave after waiting 10 minutes at a shopping destination.

For your safety, all passengers must be seated at all times while the mini-bus is in motion and the use of seat belts is required for all passengers. Passengers are to remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.

Arguing or abusive language will not be tolerated. No consumption of alcoholic beverages is allowed and transportation will not be provided for an intoxicated person. Eating, drinking or using any type of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) is not permitted on the mini-bus by passengers or drivers at any time.

Passengers may not request that drivers make changes in bus routes or stops, which have been established by the dispatcher. No unauthorized stops are allowed.

When the Meriden Public Schools are cancelled for the day due to inclement weather, mini-bus transportation is also cancelled. Please listen to the radio or watch the television station 3 WFSB for school cancellation information. If the Meriden Schools are on a delay we maintain our normal pick up schedule.