AUSTIN PARKS & RECREATION

YOUTH PROGRAMS PARENT HANDBOOK

Austin Parks and Recreation Department
AustinTexas.gov/Parks

WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome! Thank you for choosing the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department to be a part of your family's activities. Our goal is to provide your child with new and exciting experiences through supervised and structured activities in a safe and welcoming environment.

We've assembled an outstanding team of dedicated staff to care for and engage your child. On any given day, your child may participate in arts & crafts, theatre, sports, dance, outdoor adventures, nature exploration and strategic games. It is my hope that your child develops lasting relationships with new friends and mentors from these experiences.

This handbook is designed to help you prepare your child for our youth programs and to answer a variety of frequently asked questions. We encourage you to browse through it and use it as a resource in the future.

Again, thank you for choosing Austin Parks and Recreation!

Sincerely,

Kimberly McNeeley, Assistant Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

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REGISTRATION INFORMATION

GENERAL PAYMENT INFORMATION

Monthly payments are due to your Austin Parks and Recreation Department (**PARD**) program site by 5:00 PM on the 15th of the preceding month (postmark dates are not accepted). If payment is received after 5:00 PM on the 15th or later, a late fee will be assessed. If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due the following business day by 5:00 PM. Your child will be removed from the program and registration will be offered to another child on the waiting list if payment is not made by 5:00 PM on the 20th of the month.

Participants that pay a deposit for camp are secured a place in that session until the remaining balance is due. Balances are due 14-days prior to the start of camp by 5:00 PM. If you fail to pay the remaining balance, you will lose your deposit and forfeit your child's place in that session to another child on the waiting list.

Please Note: All checks received by PARD program sites are promptly processed. A fee will be charged for returned checks.

ALL DEPOSITS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE.

CANCELLATION AND REFUND INFORMATION

Failure to attend a class does not entitle you to a credit, prorate, refund or transfer. Cancellations for registration received up to 7-days prior to the first class meeting will receive a full refund minus the processing fee at that PARD program site. If the class is less than the processing fee, half of the registration cost will be refunded. Cancellations received less than 7-days prior to the first class meeting will not be issued a refund. Refunds can be issued to the credit card used in the initial transaction, by check from the City of Austin (please allow 4-6 weeks for processing), or you can request to have the refund applied to your account. Refunds will be applied to outstanding account balances before funds are released. Registration fees will be fully refunded if PARD cancels the class.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION

PARD reserves the right to cancel a class that does not meet the minimum enrollment requirement prior to the start date. If this occurs, you will be notified and a full refund will be issued.

WAIT LIST

In accordance with the Local Standards of Care for Youth Recreational Programs, the maximum number of participants a program may serve is determined by a staff-to-participant ratio. When a program reaches full enrollment, interested participants are placed on a wait list and are notified, in the order they joined the wait list, as openings become available.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING

PARD has identified a crucial need for Youth Development and Enrichment programming in Austin. In response, we have adopted the 40 Developmental Assets® as our youth development strategy, which is a recognized standard in youth programming. This approach encourages the development of key attributes in areas including Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations by providing youth participants opportunities to experience these qualities. To learn more about the 40 Developmental Assets®, please visit *www.search-institute.org.*

CHILDCARE LICENSING

PARD Programs are exempt from childcare licensing by the State of Texas for children 5 to 13 years of age. The Department is regulated by the Austin City Council through the Local Standards of Care for Youth Recreational Programs Ordinance. If you would like to review a copy of this ordinance, please visit our website at *www.austintexas.gov/recreation* or contact our main office at (512) 974-6700.

Please Note: PARD staff are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your PARD program site.

INCLUSION SUPPORT SERVICES

PARD provides opportunities wherein all individuals are accepted, included and welcomed to play, learn and grow together. If your child has a disability and you would like to request an accommodation or service, please contact the PARD program site.

PARD Inclusion Staff are Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists who help perform assessments and develop recommendations for successful participation. If you have additional questions or want more information, please call (512) 974-3914 or email *inclusion@austintexas.gov.*

PROGRAM INFORMATION

FINANCIAL AID

Our goal is to create positive experiences for Austin's youth through access to PARD programs. Financial assistance is available to households that qualify. For more information about financial aid, please visit *www.austintexas.gov/pardfinaid* or email *pardfinaid@austintexas.gov*.

REGISTRATION AND WAIVER FORM

A Program Registration and Waiver Form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian before a child may participate in any PARD programs. This form contains important contact and medical information about your child that is kept on file. Please include any requested accommodations.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT

Your child's safety is our primary concern. Parents/guardians are required to escort participants into and out of the program site each day and sign each child in and out of the day's activities. Other than a parent/guardian, only persons listed as "emergency and non-custodial release contacts" on the Registration and Waiver Form may pick up and sign out a child. Contact the program site for instructions on adding to the "non-custodial release contacts" list after the form been submitted. Proper ID is required before staff will release a child. Teen participants are not allowed to leave without written permission. **Please Note:** After school participants that are transported from school to a PARD program will be signed in by staff. If participants are not picked up by the program end time, a $1 per minute late fee may be charged.

ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE

If your child is not attending the program on a given day, please inform the site. If we have not been contacted by you, a courtesy call may be placed to confirm your child's absence.

FIELD TRIPS

If a field trip is scheduled, parents/guardians will be notified in advance. Participants must arrive before the departure time in order to participate in the program that day. Participants will not be allowed to stay behind at the site if they arrive late or do not want to participate in the field trip. Fees for field trips may be an additional expense and must be paid in full. Schedules and destinations are be subject to change.

SWIMMING

PARD programs with swimming components will have schedules posted at the site. Participants will have an opportunity to pass a swim test allowing them to swim in the deep end and, if the participant is 9 years or older, utilize the diving board. Participants that are unable to pass the swim test will be restricted to the shallow waters. If a parent/guardian wants to join swim time, the child must be signed out of the program before swimming. Swimming schedules are subject to change.

SAFETY AND FIRE DRILLS

PARD has emergency plans in effect at each program site in the event of inclement weather or other hazardous situations. Additionally, program sites conduct random fire drills. Staff are CPR and First Aid trained, and staff at facilities with swimming activities are also trained in Basic Water Rescue.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

PARD staff are not permitted to physically assist with personal hygiene or the changing of a participant's clothes. After a bathroom accident, staff will verbally guide a participant through the process of cleaning and changing while maintaining the participant's privacy.

Parents/guardians should provide a change of clothes for each child. This includes underwear, pants, shirt and socks. Please mark all clothes with your child's name. In the event that a child is unable to clean themselves or change their clothes, the parent/guardian will be called to assist.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

ITEMS TO BRING TO CAMP

Please bring a water bottle, sunscreen, insect repellent, lunch and two healthy snacks with your child. On days with pool activities, please bring swim clothes, towel and a change of clothes. Please label all personal items.

LUNCH/SNACK

Participants must bring their own non-microwavable, non-refrigerated lunch in a sack or cooler each day of camp. We recommend that you provide your child two healthy snacks to eat during daily designated snack times. Please mark your child's lunch clearly with first and last name. Participants are not allowed to leave during lunch without a parent/guardian. Please do not bring glass containers.

PARD programs may provide lunch and/or healthy snacks to participants. Please check with your PARD program site to confirm if food is provided.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

PARD is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Participants should NOT bring any valuable items to youth programs. Staff require the attention of each participant, therefore students are not allowed to play with personal belongings such as:

- Cell phones
- MP3 players and head phones
- Tablets or laptops
- Pocket or hand held games
- Trading or playing cards
- Anything disruptive

If participants bring any of the preceding items, they will be asked to keep them in their backpack. If the items are not put away or become distracting or disruptive, staff will collect and keep in the office. Exceptions may apply to teen programming.

Please Note: Participants may be asked to bring a digital device for some activities. This will only be on pre-set days and advance notification will be given. Please refer to your PARD program site for more information.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Participants are expected to wear appropriate attire for program activities. Participants should NOT wear expensive clothing as many projects and activities are messy, and your child may get dirty or wet. Please provide an old shirt to use as a smock to protect your child's clothing. Closed-toe shoes are required for safety except while at pools.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

EXPECTATIONS

Participants are encouraged to participate in all activities. At all times participants are expected to respect themselves, other participants, staff and PARD property. Behaviors that endanger oneself, other participants or staff are discouraged. Participants are expected to keep hands and feet to themselves. Foul or abusive language, disruptive behavior, running and/or shouting within buildings will not be allowed.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

It is the policy of PARD to provide youth program participants a safe and hostile free environment during their participation in PARD led programs.

DEFINITIONS

Youth: individuals 5-17 years of age.

PARD led programs: any activity in which a PARD employee is responsible for structured programming and participant safety.

Disruptive Behavior: any conduct that interrupts or disturbs a PARD service or program.

Unsafe Behavior: any action that causes bodily injury to another or damage to property or that poses a risk that the bodily injury or damage to property is reasonably likely to occur.

PROCEDURES

This policy is designed to provide guidance as to handling youth disruptive unsafe behavior displayed during a PARD led program or service. Guidance of youth must be consistent and based on an understanding of program and individual needs.

For the safety and consideration of all patrons, PARD expects youth program participants to follow program rules and respect other participants, staff, and property.

When using any behavior management methods staff will observe the following:

- There will be no harsh, cruel, corporal, or humiliating punishment.
- Staff will not use profane or abusive language in any circumstance around youth.
- Staff will not physically contain a youth or place a youth in a locked, unsupervised room.
- Staff may use brief supervised separation from the group if necessary.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

For any youth program participant who demonstrates disruptive behavior or does not adhere to facility or rules, the following procedure will be observed by staff:

- The disruptive youth participant shall be given verbal warnings by staff and the staff will document the warning and the nature of the disruptive behavior in writing.
- Staff will complete an incident report upon multiple incidents of disruptive behavior. “Multiple incidents” is considered three or more incidents of behavior that is considered disruptive or failure to comply with the rules.
- Staff will notify the participant’s parent/guardian or caregiver and provide details regarding the incident.

For any youth program participant who demonstrates unsafe behavior, the following procedure will be observed by staff:

- Staff reserves the right to remove the youth participant from a program or facility until the disruptive or unsafe behavior has been corrected.
- Staff will complete an incident report documenting the disruptive and/or unsafe behavior.
- Staff will notify the participant’s parent/guardian or caregiver.
- PARD reserves the right to dismiss the youth from a program or facility without warning when it is determined that a youth’s unsafe behavior places other participants, himself or herself, and/or staff in danger.
- Staff will contact law enforcement officers if determined to be necessary.

If a youth participant is removed from a program or facility for disruptive or unsafe behavior, then PARD reserves the right to:

- Withhold a refund of any fees for time remaining in a program to a youth participant that has been removed from the program or facility.
- After multiple recorded incidents, prohibit further participation in City of Austin Parks and Recreation youth programs.

MEDICATION RELEASE AND STANDARDS

- Staff may not administer medication to a participant without a signed Permission To Give Medication form on file. Medication must be stored in its original container with the child's given name, valid expiration date and correct dosage.
- Staff may not accept more than week's worth of medication for a participant, not to exceed a 5-day supply. To clarify, If a program meets once a week, staff can only accept medication in the quantity necessary for that one occurrence. Any unused medication shall be returned to the parent/guardian on the last day of the program.
- Staff may not administer an injection except for an epinephrine auto-injector device, which can only be administered during an emergency by trained staff. In addition, medication that is inconsistent with the prescribed dosage cannot be administered by staff.
- Staff must keep medication in a secured location that is only accessible by staff.
- Staff will maintain a medication log that includes the name of the child to whom the medication is administered, the time the medication is dispensed and the name of the person dispensing the medication.

ILLNESS/INJURY

If a child becomes ill or has an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, staff will call the phone numbers listed on the Registration and Waiver Form so that your child may be picked up. If a child becomes seriously injured, staff will contact the parent/guardian and call 911 for assistance.

ILLNESS GUIDELINES

Illness/Infection Symptom	Should you stay home?	When you can return
Chicken Pox	YES	When all pox are scabbed
Cold	NO (without fever) YES (with fever)	*See fever*
Coxsackie (hand, mouth and foot disease)	NO	
Diarrhea	YES	12 hours after last diarrhea
Ear Infection	NO (with doctor diagnosis)	
Fever (undiagnosed illness) 100.4 or greater	YES	24 hours after fever subsides and fever reducing medications have not been given in the past 8 hours
Giardia	YES	When diarrhea subsides or Dr. approves readmission
Impetigo	YES	When treatment has begun
Lice	YES	When 1 treatment has been given
Pink Eye	YES	24 hours after treatment has begun
Unidentified Rash	YES	When rash is gone unless doctor approves readmission
Ring Worm	NO (keep area covered)	
Roseola	YES (with fever)	*See fever*
Rota virus	YES	When diarrhea subsides or Dr. approves readmission
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	YES	24 hours after treatment has begun and fever free
Thrush	NO (should seek treatment)	
Vomiting	YES	12 hours after vomiting

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **If my child does not attend every day can my fee be prorated?**
   No. Attendance is the responsibility of the participant. Failure to attend a class does not entitle you to a transfer or refund. Make-ups are not available and fees are not prorated for absences *(see page 4)*.
2. **How should my child dress?**
   Wear comfortable clothing appropriate for activities and movement such as t-shirts, pants or shorts and sneakers *(see page 7)*.
3. **Do I need to sign my child in and out every day?**
   Yes. Safety is our first concern; therefore, we require that you sign your child in and out every day *(see page 6)*.
4. **Can you just give my child aspirin for a headache?**
   No. If your child needs to take any type of medication (prescribed or non-prescribed), a Permission To Give Medication form must be provided by the parent/guardian *(see page 11)*.

5. **Can a neighbor, friend, or relative pick up my child?**
   Yes, but each child must be signed in/out by a designated person on the child's Registration and Waiver Form (photo ID required). Changes or additions to the "emergency and non-custodial release contact" list can only be made by following instructions provided by the PARD program site *(see page 6)*.
6. **If I'm in a hurry can you send my child out to meet me at the curb?**
   No. Safety is our first concern; therefore, we require that you sign your child in/out every day. Participants will not be allowed to run out to the car or wait at the curb *(see page 6)*.
7. **Why can't my child bring his/her digital device?**
   PARD is not responsible for any lost or stolen property. Our staff require your child's attention; items from home can be distracting to other students and staff. Exceptions may apply to teen programming, please check with your PARD program site *(see page 8)*.

NOTES

Mayor and City Council

Steve Adler	Mayor
Kathie Tovo	Mayor Pro Tem, District 9 Council Member
Ora Houston	District 1 Council Member
Delia Garza	District 2 Council Member
Sabino "Pio" Renteria	District 3 Council Member
Gregorio "Greg" Casar	District 4 Council Member
Ann Kitchen	District 5 Council Member
Don Zimmerman	District 6 Council Member
Leslie Pool	District 7 Council Member
Ellen Troxclair	District 8 Council Member
Sheri Gallo	District 10 Council Member

Office of the City Manager

Marc A. Ott	City Manager
Ray Baray	Chief of Staff
Rey Arellano	Assistant City Manager
Sue Edwards	Assistant City Manager
Robert Goode	Assistant City Manager
Bert Lumbreras	Assistant City Manager
Mark Washington	Acting Assistant City Manager

Parks and Recreation Department

Sara L. Hensley, CPRP	Director
Kimberly A. McNeeley, CPRP	Assistant Director
Marty Stump	Assistant Director
Cora D. Wright	Assistant Director

Parks and Recreation Board

Jane Rivera	Chair
Richard DePalma	Vice Chair
Alison Alter	Board Member
Michael Casias	Board Member
Rick Cofer	Board Member
Tom Donovan	Board Member
Alesha Larkins	Board Member
Francoise Luca	Board Member
Alex Schmitz	Board Member
Mark Vane	Board Member
Pat Wimberly	Board Member

Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Department is to provide, protect and preserve a park system that promotes quality recreational, cultural and outdoor experiences for the Austin community.

Austin Parks & Recreation
200 South Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78704

Like us on facebook!
facebook.com/austinparksfamilies

The City of Austin is proud to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require assistance for participation in our programs or use of our facilities, please contact our Inclusion Services Office at 512-974-3914.