



AUSTIN  
PARKS &  
RECREATION

YOUTH PROGRAMS  
PARENT  
HANDBOOK

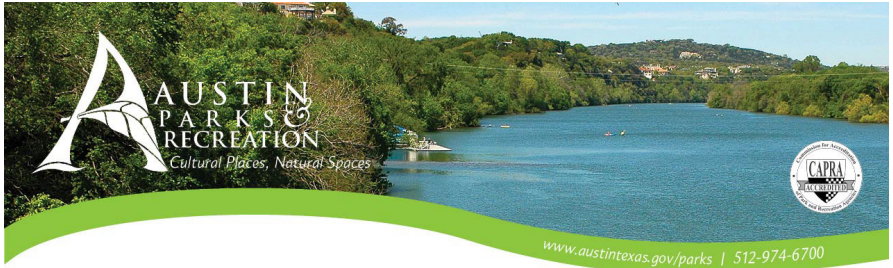


Austin Parks and Recreation  
Department  
[AustinTexas.gov/Parks](http://AustinTexas.gov/Parks)



Youth Programs Parent Handbook  
updated annually

# WELCOME LETTER



Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to welcome you, and thank you for choosing the City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department to be a part of your family's activities. It's no secret Austin is home to a wide variety of recreation and leisure opportunities, and we are thrilled you have entrusted us to steward your child through new and exciting experiences.

Our organization believes every child deserves opportunity; the opportunity to grow and learn through meaningful experiences with positive and supportive relationships in a healthy and safe environment. Our Department is committed to providing affordable, safe, accessible and high-quality programs with an intentional focus on youth development. So, whether your child participates in an after school program, a camp, sports, or any one of our other great programs, our hope is that your child and family will be positively impacted and enriched because of your time with us.

The Parent Handbook is designed to acquaint you with our youth program guidelines, as well as to provide valuable information to help prepare you and your child for what to can expect in our programs. We encourage you to browse through the handbook and use it as a resource should you have any questions.

As always, we hope you enjoy your experience with us! And again, I thank you for choosing the City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department!

Sincerely,

Lucas Massie, Acting Assistant Director  
Austin Parks & Recreation Department

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# REGISTRATION INFORMATION

## GENERAL PAYMENT INFORMATION

All youth program payments and outstanding balances are due to your Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) program site by designated due date(s). Program sessions with a deposit option (Afterschool and Summer Camps), require deposits upon program registration. If outstanding balances are not received by designated due dates, your child will be removed from the program and the deposit will be forfeited. Once registration is forfeited, re-enrollment will require a separate deposit (if applicable), along with full payment.

Participants who pay a deposit for either Afterschool or Summer Camp session(s) are secured a place in that session until the remaining balance is due. Full payment of the activity fee will also secure a place in that session; this is greatly encouraged. Afterschool deposits will be applied to the last month of scheduled enrollment; Summer Camp deposit is applied to the respective session. Requests to transfer deposit/payment between PARD program sites may be permitted prior to the program's designated outstanding balance due date.

## AFTERSCHOOL/SUMMER CAMP PAYMENT

- **Afterschool** (Fall and Spring Sessions) monthly payments and outstanding balances are due by the 15th of the prior month. Postmark dates are not accepted. If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due the following business day. If payment is not received by the 20th of the month your child will be removed from the program and deposit will be forfeited.
- **Summer Camp** session payments are due by 21 calendar days prior to the start of camp. 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 21 calendar days prior to the start of camp. If payment is not received 18 calendar days prior, your child will be removed from the program and deposit will be forfeited.

**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\*\*\***

## CANCELLATION AND REFUND INFORMATION

- Failure to attend a class does not entitle you to a credit, prorated fee, refund or transfer.
- Registration cancellations requests received up to 7 calendar days prior to the first program meeting will receive a refund minus the processing fee at the PARD program site, as well as any deposits. If the cost of the

# REGISTRATION INFORMATION

program is less than the processing fee, half the registration cost will be refunded.

- Registration cancellations received less than 7 calendar days prior to the first class meeting will not be issued a refund.
- Refunds will 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.

## PROGRAM 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 program. This form contains important contact and medical information about your child that is kept on file. Please include any requested accommodations.

## 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. Financial assistance can take up to 3 weeks to process, so apply in advance of program registration. Financial assistance cannot be applied to payments that have already been received. Participation in the program requires annual renewal. For more information about financial aid, visit [www.austintexas.gov/pardfinaid](http://www.austintexas.gov/pardfinaid) or email [pardfinaid@austintexas.gov](mailto:pardfinaid@austintexas.gov).

## 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 or our Inclusion Unit staff.

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 on services provided, please call (512) 974-3914 or email [inclusion@austintexas.gov](mailto:inclusion@austintexas.gov).



# PROGRAM INFORMATION

## 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](http://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](http://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.

# PROGRAM INFORMATION

## 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, administered by PARD's certified lifeguards, allowing them to swim in the deep end, utilize diving boards, water slides, and other applicable swimming pool features. 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. Once a child is signed out of a PARD program, the parent/guardian assumes full responsibility. Swimming schedules are subject to change.

## SAFETY 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 safety drills. All youth programming staff are *CPR* and *First Aid* trained. Furthermore, staff at facilities with swimming activities are also trained in *Basic Water Rescue*.

## LOST PARTICIPANT PREVENTION AND PROCEDURE

Staff are trained to prevent a lost participant scenario, and to react timely and professionally in the event one occurs. The opportunity for a lost participant incident to occur is greatly reduced by adhering to appropriate leader-to-participant ratios, the buddy system, and frequent head counts and roll calls. As soon as staff realize a participant is missing from the group, they immediately activate the following procedures:

1. Staff note the exact time a participant was no longer with the group.
2. Staff identify the participant who is lost and gather details.
3. Staff inform the Program Supervisor of the situation.
4. While program staff continue to keep the other participants together and safe, remaining staff search for the participant, checking in with the group often to see if the participant has returned.
5. If the participant is not found within 10 minutes of the search, staff contact 911 while search continues.
6. Immediately following 911, staff contact the guardian of the lost participant and inform them of the situation.

# PROGRAM POLICIES

## 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 who 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.

## 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.

## 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. Additionally, we strongly encourage you provide your child with 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, and sharing food between participants is highly discouraged. Please do not bring glass containers.

Please be aware that some sites may have additional food/snack



# PROGRAM POLICIES

requirements due to certain dietary and/or allergy restrictions, such as peanut allergy. Please check with site program staff for additional information.

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, damaged 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.

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.

## 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 prohibited. 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.

PARD reserves the right to remove any youth from a program or facility without warning when it is determined that the youth's unsafe behavior poses a direct threat to other participants, himself or herself, and/or staff



# BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

## 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 in such a manner that it negatively impacts the safety or ability of other participants to successfully participate in that service or program. Disruptive behavior could include, but is not limited to: use of disparaging or abusive language, horseplay, yelling, distracting others, invading other's personal space, bullying, etc.

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 and cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

Multiple incidents: three or more incidents of behavior that is considered disruptive or failure to comply with the rules.

## PROCEDURES

This policy is designed to provide guidance as to handling youth disruptive and 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 use positive behavior management techniques and language. Staff shall 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.

For any youth program participant who demonstrates repeated disruptive behavior or who does not adhere to facility or rules, the following procedure

# BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

will be observed by staff:

- The youth participant who engages in disruptive behavior shall be given verbal warnings by staff and the staff will document the warning and the nature of the disruptive behavior in writing , using the daily communication log or similar tool per site's standard operating procedure.
- Staff will complete an incident report upon multiple incidents of disruptive behavior.
- Staff will notify the participant's parent/guardian or caregiver and provide details regarding the incident.
- Program staff shall contact the Department Inclusion Unit for consultation and assessment of the participant.

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

- Staff reserve the right to remove any youth participant from a program or facility until the unsafe behavior has been corrected.
- Staff will complete an incident report documenting the unsafe behavior.
- Program staff shall contact the Department Inclusion Unit for consultation and assessment of the participant.
- Staff will notify the participant's parent/guardian or caregiver.
- Program staff shall contact the Department Inclusion Unit for consultation and assessment of the participant.
- PARD reserves the right to remove the youth from the program or facility without warning when it is determined that a youth's unsafe behavior poses a direct threat to other participants, himself or herself, and/or staff.
- 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 shall specify in writing the date, time, and conditions under which a participant may return.

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. Department refund procedures can be found on page 4.
- After multiple recorded incidents, conditions for returning to a PARD program will be established through a meeting with the program site supervisor, the parent/guardian/caretaker of the participant, and a representative from the Department Inclusion Unit.

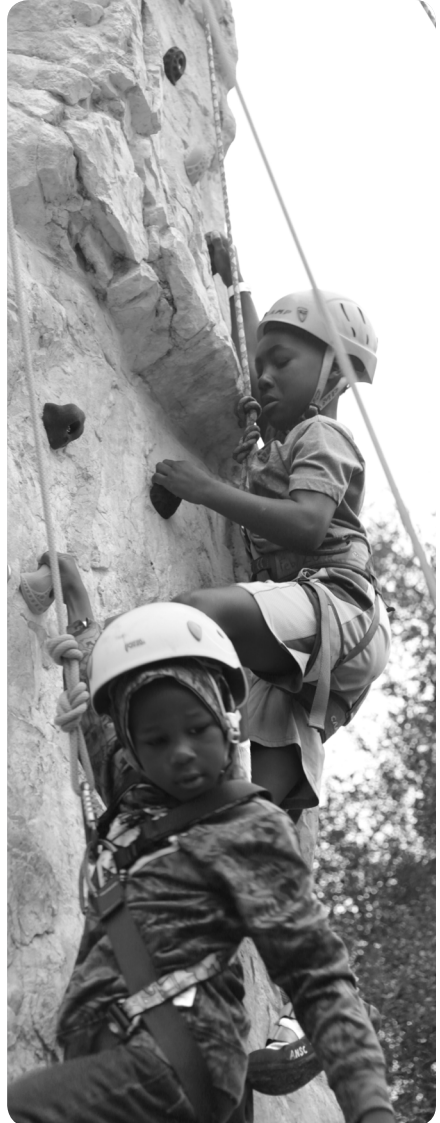
# ILLNESS GUIDELINES

## 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 a 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)	<i>See fever</i>
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)	<i>See fever</i>
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 closed-toe shoes (*see page 8*).

**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 a neighbor, friend or relative pick up my child?**

Yes, but the 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*).

**5. 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*).

**6. 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*).

**7. Why can't my child bring his/her digital device?**

PARD is not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen property. Our staff require your child's attention; items from home can be distracting to other students and staff as well as pose safety concerns. Exceptions may apply to teen programming, please check with your PARD program site (*see page 8*).

**8. Under what conditions can my child be removed from a program?**

While PARD makes every effort to ensure the success of each participant, staff reserve the right to remove any participant from a program or facility when disruptive or unsafe behavior places themselves, other participants, or staff in danger. (*see page 9*)

## Mayor and City Council

Steve Adler	Mayor
Delia Garza	Mayor Pro Tem, District 2 Council Member
Natasha Harper-Madison	District 1 Council Member
Sabino "Pio" Renteria	District 3 Council Member
Gregorio "Greg" Casar	District 4 Council Member
Ann Kitchen	District 5 Council Member
Jimmy Flannigan	District 6 Council Member
Leslie Pool	District 7 Council Member
Paige Ellis	District 8 Council Member
Kathie Tovo	District 9 Council Member
Alison Alter	District 10 Council Member

## Office of the City Manager

Spencer Cronk	City Manager
Elaine Hart	Deputy Chief of Staff
Rey Arellano	Assistant City Manager
Rodney Gonzales	Assistant City Manager
Christopher J. Shorter	Assistant City Manager
Jim Smith	Interim Assistant City Manager

## Parks and Recreation Department

Sara L. Hensley, CPRP	Director
Anthony Segura	Assistant Director
Liana Kallivoka, PhD, P.E.	Assistant Director
Lucas Massie	Acting Assistant Director
Suzanne Piper	Chief Administrative Officer

## Parks and Recreation Board

Jane Rivera	Chair
Rick Cofer	Vice Chair
Michael Casias	Board Member
Richard DePalma	Board Member
Tom Donovan	Board Member
Romteen Farasat	Board Member
Dawn Lewis	Board Member
Francoise Luca	Board Member
Randy Mann	Board Member
Fred Morgan	Board Member
Frank Ward	Board Member

## Mission

Inspire Austin to learn, play, protect and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places.

## Vision

The Parks and Recreation Department will be an innovative leader in parks and recreation experiences.



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



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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.

January 2019