

City of North Richland Hills
Parks and Recreation Department
Youth Programs Standards of Care

I. GENERAL INFORMATION / ADMINISTRATION

Purpose: To provide basic childcare regulations for activities operated by the North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department. This will allow the department to qualify as exempt from requirements of the Texas Human Resources Code.

A. Organization:

1. The governing body of the City of North Richland Hills Youth Programs is the City of North Richland Hills City Council.
2. Implementation of the *Youth Programs Standards of Care* is the responsibility of the Assistant Director of Recreation and Recreation Division Staff.
3. The *Youth Programs Standards of Care* will apply to several day camp programs which are conducted by the North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department throughout the year.
4. Each Youth Program site will have available for public and staff a current copy of the *Standards of Care*.
5. Parents of participants will be provided a current copy of the *Standards of Care* during the registration process.

B. Implementation: The *Standards of Care* Program will be the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department, with the Recreation Coordinator overseeing the overall program and the Day Camp Director administering the program on-site.

Regulations apply to these on-going programs:

Winter Break Camp
Spring Break Camp
Summer Day Camp
Fall Break Camp
Sport and Art Camps
Youth Programs
Drop-in Childcare

Other: Each camp will make available for public and staff a current copy of the *Standards of Care*. Parents of participants will be provided a copy of *Standards of Care* during the registration process and the Camp NRH parent orientation prior to camp starting each year.

Program Sites: NRH Centre 6000 Hawk Avenue

C. Day Camp Objectives:

1. To provide youth with the opportunity to experience a variety of recreational activities which include sports, games, arts and crafts, education, drama, special events, field trips, tournaments, etc.
2. To provide an encouraging atmosphere emphasizing positive development of physical skills, emotional growth and self-confidence.
3. To provide a safe environment; always promoting good health and welfare for all.
4. To teach children how to spend their leisure time wisely; in an effort to meet the emotional, physical, and social needs of the child.

D. Exemption Status:

Once an exempt status is established, the Licensing Division will not monitor the recreational program. The Licensing Division will be responsible for investigating complaints of unlicensed child care and for referring other complaints to the municipal authorities or, in the case of abuse/neglect allegation, to the local police authorities.

E. Standards of Care Review:

Standards will be reviewed annually and brought to the City Council for approval after a public hearing is held to pass an ordinance regarding section 42.041(b) (14) of the Texas Human Resources Code. Childcare Licensing will not regulate these programs nor be involved in any complaint investigation related to the program.

Any parent, visitor or staff may register a complaint by contacting the North Richland Hills NRH Centre Manager at 817-427-6600 or the Parks and Recreation Administrative Offices at 817-427-6620, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

II. STAFFING

A. Day Camp Director – The Day Camp Director directs a staff of 10 day camp counselors and supervises the activities of children in a day camp setting.

1. Essential Job Functions:

- a.) Direct and supervise all counselors including hiring and training.
- b.) Complete and submit proper records including camp schedules, counselor work schedules, payroll, accident/incident reports and attendance.
- c.) Develop age appropriate camp curriculum (5-15 years) in accordance with the philosophy of the program.
- d.) Ensure staff is committed to following established guidelines, procedures and standards.
- e.) Maintain an orderly, clean and safe environment for the children while promoting a non-competitive program directed toward accentuating positive behaviors, physical development and emotional growth.
- f.) Develop and distribute a weekly schedule of activities.
- g.) Complete facility reservations and transportation needs for all camp activities.
- h.) Schedule, confirm, obtain and distribute payment for all field trips.
- i.) Maintain supplies, equipment and all necessary documentation for the operation of the camp.
- j.) Communicate to parents about camper's progress and activities.

- k.) Conduct on-going program evaluations implementing approved recommendations as needed.
 - l.) Provide reports to the Recreation Coordinator on a weekly basis to monitor camp activities throughout the program.
2. **Qualifications:**
- a.) Bachelor's Degree in Education or Recreation is preferred but not required.
 - b.) A minimum of three years experience as a camp counselor and/or educator.
 - c.) Requires a valid Texas driver's license with a good driving record over the last three years.
 - d.) Must pass city criminal background check prior to hiring.
 - e.) Must pass pre-employment drug screen and/or physical.
 - f.) Must complete First Aid and CPR certification prior to camp.
3. **Requirements of Work:**
- a.) Director must complete the mandatory staff training program of at least 20 hours, in addition to planning hours with site staff prior to the start of camp. This training includes departmental orientation, customer service, sexual harassment training, behavioral issues and discipline, training and examination program on sexual abuse and child molestation, as well as practical skills on activities for children in games, songs and crafts.
 - b.) Ability to be physically active and involved with children all day.
 - c.) Ability to lift 55 pounds.
 - d.) Knowledge of child development and age appropriate activities.
 - e.) Advanced organizational and communication skills.
 - f.) Team leadership abilities.
 - g.) Varied experience in a variety of activities including sports, arts, nature, drama and cooperative activities.

B. Day Camp Counselor – The Day Camp Counselor is responsible for direct leadership of youth ages 5-15 in a variety of activities including, but not limited to games, sports, crafts, special events and field trips. The counselor assists in planning and organization of camp schedules, activities, supplies and equipment, and is also responsible for cleanliness of the areas used by camp participants. The counselor positions are also responsible for completing necessary forms relating to attendance, check-in/check-out procedures, accidents, and incidents.

1. **Essential Job Functions:**
- a.) Promote a non-competitive, positive, self-image enhancing environment for each participant through the direction of non-competitive, fun, varied and well organized activities.
 - b.) Directly lead activities using a method that will provide opportunity for the involvement of all children on an equal level. The Counselor prepares, in advance, directions for activities, daily schedules and required equipment used during the activities.
 - c.) Exhibit enthusiasm for the activity to impart a feeling of excitement to camp participants.
 - d.) Follow procedures for camper check-in/check-out. Reports accidents/incidents, behavioral modifications and camp schedules.

- e.) Follow guidelines for safety and storage of equipment, including inventory of supplies.
 - f.) Ensure safety of youth during transportation while on field trips.
 - g.) Provide and adhere to established guidelines set forth for the safety, behavior, communication and discipline of the camp participants.
 - h.) Recognize and reward positive, improved and outstanding behavior and/or accomplishments of camp participants.
2. **Minimum Qualifications:**
- a.) High school diploma with two years of college preferred.
 - b.) One year experience working with children in a day camp setting.
 - c.) A valid Texas driver's license with a good driving record over the last three years.
 - d.) Must pass criminal background check prior to hiring.
 - e.) Must pass pre-employment drug screen and/or physical.
 - f.) Must complete First Aid and CPR certification prior to camp.
3. **Other Requirements:**
- a.) Staff must complete the mandatory staff training program of at least 20 hours, in addition to planning hours with site staff prior to the start of camp. This training includes departmental orientation, customer service, sexual harassment training, behavioral issues and discipline, training and examination program on sexual abuse and child molestation, as well as practical skills on activities for children in games, songs and crafts.
 - b.) Staff must exhibit competency, good judgment and self control throughout the duration of the camp.
 - c.) Staff should relate to the children with courtesy, respect, acceptance and patience.
 - d.) Staff will be evaluated at least once during the summer prior to the completion of camp. Evaluations will be reviewed with the camp counselors to discuss any areas of improvement or suggestions.
4. **Criminal Background Checks:** Criminal background checks will be conducted on prospective day camp employees. Applicants may be disqualified if they have a job related criminal conviction. A prospective employee will be subject to a pre-employment drug test and/or physical prior to hiring.
5. **Staffing Ratios:** The state required ratio for number of children (ages 5-15) may not exceed 15:1 children to staff. Camp NRH Day Camp maintains 12:1 children (ages 5-15) to staff ratio. On all field trips Camp NRH Day Camp maintains 7:1 children to staff ratio.

III. FACILITY STANDARDS

- A.** Emergency evacuation and relocation plans will be posted at each facility. Program employees will inspect sites frequently for any sanitation or safety concerns. Those concerns should be passed on to the Recreation Coordinator or NRH Centre Manager immediately.
- B.** Each camp must have a fully stocked first aid kit. This shall be checked and stocked on a weekly basis by the Recreation Coordinator. It shall include bandages and Band-Aids, first aid cream, rubber gloves, Neosporin, alcohol wipes, hot/cold packs, gauze, tweezers and scissors.

- C. In a situation where evacuation is necessary, the first priority of staff is to make sure all participants are in a safe location. Program sites will be inspected by the Fire Marshall annually. Each Facility Manager is responsible for compliance with Fire Marshall's directives. The recommended number of fire extinguishers shall be inspected quarterly and available and "primed" for use. Fire drills should be conducted once a month during the summer camp.
- D. Medication will only be administered with written parent consent completed on the registration form provided by the City of North Richland Hills. Prescription medications shall be left with staff in their original container, labeled with the child's name, date, directions, photo of the child and the child's physician's name. Medication will be logged into the Medication Log Book. Medication shall be dispensed only as stated on the bottle unless directed otherwise by parent/guardian or physician, and not past the expiration date.
- E. Non-prescription medicine with the child's name and date on the medication may be brought if in the original container. This medication will also be logged in the Medication Log Book and be dispensed only as stated on the bottle unless directed otherwise by parent/guardian or physician.
- F. Each indoor site shall have adequate indoor toilets and lavatories located such that children can use them independently and program staff can supervise as needed. There shall be one flush toilet per 30 children. Outdoor sites shall provide portable toilets based on number of children attending each day. Sinks shall be provided based on 1 sink per 30 children.
- G. All participants must wear tennis shoes daily. Sandals will not be allowed.

IV. SERVICE STANDARDS—Day Camp Staff

- A. This information will be provided to each staff member as a part of the day camp staff manual:
 1. Appropriate shirts, shorts and tennis shoes are to be worn at all times. Camp NRH staff shirts are to be worn on the designated days. No tube tops allowed. Shorts should be at a respectable length, no cut-offs. No clothing should bear any inappropriate logos, phrases, or pictures. Any staff member, who does not adhere to the dress code, will be sent home for the day without pay.
 2. Staff will be provided with two Camp NRH T-shirts. Uniform schedules will be given to staff during training and should be followed throughout the summer. Any deviation must be approved by the Recreation Coordinator.
 3. Only one-piece bathing suits may be worn when visiting NRH₂O.
 4. Name tags/IDs should be worn and clearly visible at all times.
 5. Camp participants and parents will be treated with respect at all times.
 6. Camp staff will take it upon themselves to resolve complaints. Do not refer the customer to another staff member, unless necessary. If you are unable to resolve the complaint on the spot, take the customer's name and phone number, investigate the complaint and follow up with the customer. All complaints should be recorded

(problem and resolution) on a Customer Comment Form provided by the Recreation Coordinator.

7. Camp staff will keep parents informed of camp activities. A weekly schedule will be distributed one week in advance and extra copies will be kept with the daily sign in log. In addition to hard copies of the weekly schedule parents will be notified of changes to the schedule via email correspondence. Camp staff will note details of behavior of campers (accomplishments, discipline problems, general activities, etc.) in the daily campers log and verbally update parents as much as possible.
8. Camp staff will monitor the check-in/check-out log at all times.
9. Camp staff will clean program areas after each activity. Floors will be swept/vacuumed, mirrors cleaned, and supplies put away. This is extremely important due to the fact that rooms are used throughout the day by other groups.
10. Camp staff will spend the majority of their time actively involved with campers and/or parents. Camp staff will check all messages for the day, prior to beginning any camp activities.

V. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- A. Emergency phone numbers are kept at the NRH Centre front desk, as well as with the Day Camp Director on field trips. Those numbers include fire, police, and ambulance services.
- B. The Day Camp Manual is provided to every staff member and outlines the following:
 1. Behavior Management and Discipline Procedures
 2. Rules and Regulations
 3. Forms
 4. Service Standards
 5. Game/Activity Leadership
 6. Guidelines for Communication with children and parents
- C. Check-in/check-out forms will be used every day. Only adults listed on the camper's release form will be allowed to pick up children. The authorized parent/guardian must enter the building and sign the check-out form in order for staff to release the child.
- D. Emergency evacuation and relocation plans will be posted at each facility.

E. Transportation Requirements

A Texas state law for child safety seats; specifically booster seats, went into effect on September 1, 2009. This law applies to children under the age of 8 and under 4'9" tall. This law will apply to Camp NRH participants between the ages of 6-7 years old.

The law states:

- Once a child reaches eight (8) years old, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
- If the child is younger than eight years old, BUT they are already 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
- If a child is eight years old or older; and not yet 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.

- The law requires that safety and booster seats be installed and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, including age, height and weight requirements and the placement in the vehicle.

In compliance with this new law, parents will be required to provide a booster seat for their child if that child is under 8 years old and measures less than 4'9". This new requirement will be sent to parents via letter and email prior to May 1 of each camp year. Camp NRH will have five booster seats on-site for transportation services required for field trips and other Camp NRH activities in the event that a camper forgets to bring their booster seat with them to camp.

Camp NRH staff will be trained to identify children that are required to be in a booster based on birth date of camper identifying the legal age of the child and by utilizing a height measuring tool. In addition, staff will be trained by City of North Richland Hills Police Department officers on how to properly install a child safety seat. Coordination of this training will be scheduled and confirmed by the Recreation Coordinator who oversees Camp NRH.

- F. Parents will be notified regarding planned field trips and provided the required release forms. Enrollment information will be kept and maintained on each vehicle while traveling to and from field trip sites.
- G. Enrollment information will be kept and maintained on each child and shall include:
 1. Child's name, birth date, home address, home telephone number, physician's phone number and address and phone numbers where parents may be reached during the day.
 2. Name, driver's license number and telephone number of persons to whom the child can be released.
 3. Field trip release form as needed.
 4. Liability waiver.
 5. Parental consent to administer medication, medical information and release on participant.
- H. Staff shall immediately notify the parent or other person authorized by the parent when the child is injured or has been involved in any situation, which placed the child at risk.
- I. The Recreation Coordinator shall notify the parents/guardians of participants' if/when there is an outbreak of a communicable disease in the facility as required by the County Department of Health. Staff must notify parents of children in a group when there is an outbreak of lice or other infestation in the group.

VI. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

- A. Program employees will implement discipline and guidance in a consistent manner based on an understanding of individual needs and development with the best interests of program participants in mind.
- B. There will be no harsh, cruel, or corporal punishment used as a method of discipline.

- C. Program employees may use brief, supervised separation from the group if necessary. Children will be aware of all camp rules prior to the start of any activity. Their understanding of the rules is an integral part of behavior management. When negative behavior occurs they will know there is a consequence for their chosen action.
- D. Incident reports will be filled out on any disciplinary cases, and information is to be shared with parents when picking up the child (or sooner when extreme cases occur). Parents will be asked to sign the incident reports to indicate they have been advised about specific problems and/or negative behaviors.
- F. A sufficient number and/or severe nature of discipline reports as detailed in the program manual may result in a participant being suspended from the program. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.
- G. In instances where there is danger including physical harm or threat of physical harm to participants, staff, or themselves; the offending participant(s) will be removed from the program immediately. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.

VII. ILLNESS OR INJURY

- A. Participants shall have and maintain immunizations in accordance with those required by the Texas Department of Health for public school attendance according to age.
- B. Parents shall be notified in cases of illness or injury.
- C. An ill child will not be allowed to participate if the child is suspected of having a temperature and/or accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms until a medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the activities. In the event an injury cannot be remedied through basic first aid, staff shall notify paramedics.
- D. When an injury occurs, an incident report shall be filled out immediately after the incident, with the original sent to the NRH Centre Manager's office with a copy kept in the Day Camp files.
- E. In the event of suspected abuse, program employees will report suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with the Texas Family Code. In the case where a City employee is involved in an incident with a child that could be construed as child abuse, the incident must be immediately reported to the Assistant Director of Recreation. The Assistant Director will immediately notify the Police Department and any other agency as may be appropriate.
- F. Texas state law requires the staff of youth programs to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or a law enforcement agency. Failure to report suspected abuse is punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and/or confinement up to 180 days. Confidential reports may be made by calling 1-800-252-5400.

VIII. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

- A.** As a part of the Day Camp Manual, staff should be given the following information:
1. A child is not allowed to use the phone unless it is an emergency. In this case, Day Camp staff should make the call for the child.
 2. Children must stay off tables, counter tops, ping pong tables, etc.
 3. Children should walk in the building. Running is only permitted in the gym.
 4. Bouncing and throwing balls is permitted only in the gym or designated game area with direct supervision from staff.
 5. Active games using equipment that can cause damage to window, shades, lights, and ceilings must be played only in the gym or outdoors.
 6. Children must respect staff and each other.
 7. Children must wear shoes at all times.
 8. Children must be contained and not allowed to filter in the general public. You must know where each child is at all times.
- B.** The program will provide activities for each group according to the participants' ages, interests and abilities. The activities should be flexible and promote social and educational advancement.
1. A weekly calendar of activities will be posted for parents the Friday prior to the next week of camp.
 2. When taking field trips, staff will:
 - a.) Count everyone before they leave the program site as well as prior to leaving the field trip site.
 - b.) Carry medical information on each child and necessary medication with them on the trip.
 - c.) Carry a first aid kit and mobile phone in all vehicles and while on-site.
 - d.) All participants are required to wear wristbands that have Camp NRH and NRH Centre phone number inscribed on them. Participants are also encouraged to wear camp shirts so that children are easily identified.

IX. MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

- A.** *Standards of Care* established by the City of North Richland Hills will be monitored and enforced by City Departments responsible for their respective areas. Health and safety standards will be monitored and enforced by the City's Police, Fire, and Consumer Health Departments when applicable.
- B.** Staff and program issues will be monitored and enforced by the North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department. The NRH Centre Manager shall visit each site on a bi-weekly basis. The Recreation Coordinator is responsible for visually checking the camp activities on a daily basis. When not available, another full-time staff person is responsible for that check.
- C.** Monthly reporting by the Recreation Coordinator to the NRH Centre Manager will include a review of adherence to the *Standards of Care* as well as operational summaries of the programming month.

For further information regarding the *Youth Program Standards of Care* or any other information about the youth programs offered through the City of North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department please contact the NRH Centre Manager or Recreation Coordinator at 817-427-6600 or email NRHPARD@nrhtx.com.