

City of Gardena
Recreation, Human Services, Parks, and Facilities Department
(310) 217-9537 · www.ci.gardena.ca.us

After School Program

Parents/Guardian & Participant Handbook



City of Gardena After School Program Parent/Guardian and Participant Handbook

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Welcome to the City of Gardena Recreation Department After School Program!

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the policies and procedures that govern the After School Program. It is our hope that the information listed within this handbook will make your experience more enjoyable. In an effort to continue offering the quality of programming within each of the After School Programs, regulations must be strictly enforced. In the event that procedures are updated during the school year, you will be notified.

We look forward to a successful school year!

After School Program General Information

Nakaoka Community Center	(310) 217-9537
Freeman Park.....	(310) 217-9558
Rowley Park (if available)	(310) 217-9562

Meeting Locations:

Nakaoka Community Center-

The After School Program at NCC meets in Room C and Room E.

On Friday's the NCC After School Program will be held at Johnson Park. (subject to change).

Freeman Park After School Program-

The After School Program at Freeman Park meets in the classroom.

Note: If for some reason the children are brought to a different location, a sign will be posted on the location door to let parents/guardians know where the After School Program has been relocated. Or call the (310)217-9537 to find the location to pick up your child. If possible, you will be notified of the location change in advance.

After School Program Hours

Children will be supervised from the time they are picked up after school until 6:00 pm. Parents picking up children after 6:00 pm will be charged an additional staffing fee of \$5.00 for the first 15 minutes, then \$5.00 for each 5 minutes after 6:15 pm. Late fees are due at time of pick-up.

Waiting List

Waiting lists are established once a program has filled. Once you are called from the waiting list, you will be given three working days to register. If you do not register within the three working days, you will be removed from the waiting list and the next participant on the waiting list will be called. Please keep your phone number(s) and information current with the Recreation Office.

Extended Day Care (i.e. Holidays and Unassigned Days)

The City of Gardena offers all day care for the single day holidays and unassigned days. These days will only apply for Los Angeles Unified School District schedules only. We offer day care from 7:00 am- 6:00 pm. The cost is \$20.00 for children who are currently in our after school program. For children not currently enrolled in our after school program it is \$25.00 per child.

Notification of Special Needs

Please notify staff if your child has any special needs, allergies, etc. and provide complete information on the participant's After School Program application.

Children with special needs may be admitted after supervisors discuss with the parent/guardian the child's strengths and limitations prior to the registration process. The parent/guardian and staff will evaluate the appropriateness of the program for the child and identify reasonable accommodations. Our After School Program is a group-based program therefore; we are not able to provide one on one-day care for a child.

Mandated Reporting

The City of Gardena Recreation Department employees are mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect directly to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

What Not to Bring to After School Program

The City of Gardena Recreation Department is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items of the participants. We do not allow cell phones, music players, laptop computers, headphones, pagers, video games, personal and/or electronic toys, bicycles, rollerblades, skateboards or scooters; snacks that require cooking; games such as Yu-Gi-Oh and Pokemon. The only exception will be on Electronics Day, which will be scheduled in advance. Staff will provide a list of appropriate items children can bring.

Cell Phones

Cell phone use by participants is prohibited. Staff will immediately confiscate any cell phone being used and return it at the end of the day. An exception to this is a middle school child walking to our facility will be able to call their parent upon arrival only. This policy is designed to help all participants remain engaged and have a better and more meaningful experience while at the After School Program. Parents/Guardians are advised to call the site if there is an emergency. Please assist us in this area by refraining from calling or texting your child's cell phone during program hours. Cell phones can be used on Electronics Day for games. Texting, phone calls and internet use are not allowed.

Lost and Found/Damaged Items

Lost and found items will be kept on site. Lost items will be held for two weeks at the Nakaoka Community Center front desk. The City of Gardena Recreation Department and/or its employees are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items. We strongly encourage participants to have their name written on all of their property.

Participant Pickup Up Information

A pick up list on the application is required for each participant and are kept at each After School Program site. Please keep this information current, as they contain emergency contact information and an authorized list of adults allowed to pick up your child. You are encouraged to list anyone who might pick up your child, especially in case of an emergency. Adults 18 years of age and older who are listed will be allowed to sign out participants, in addition to parents and legal guardians. Court documents will need to be provided in the event that a parent/guardian is not permitted to pick up a child.

Program Structure

Each After School Program site will have a unique program and may vary each day. Below is a general schedule:

- Homework Time: The first hour of each day.
 - Snack Time: Immediately following homework time.
 - Activities: 4:00-5:30 p.m. Indoor and outdoor games, indoor crafts, watching cartoons or movies, board games, community service projects and walking field trips.
 - Indoor Activities: 5:30-6:00 p.m. indoor games and activities.
- * Scheduled activities are subject to change.

Homework

- The first hour is homework time. Participants are required to work on their homework unless their parent/guardian does not want them to do their homework at the program. If they don't have any homework, or if they complete their homework before the end of homework time, they will be allowed to quietly read a book or work on their writing skills.
- Staff will assist participants; however, they will not receive one on one tutoring.
- Staff can assist with homework but cannot guarantee that all homework will be completed. Staff are not responsible for checking the accurate completion of homework.
- When homework time ends, staff will direct their attention to other activities scheduled that day. Participants may continue to work on their homework after homework time, provided they do so in the same area where activities are being held. Staff will not assist participants with their homework after homework time.
- Participants must bring all their own supplies (i.e. pencils, erasers, paper and books).

Snacks

A light snack will be provided. Parents/Guardians may pack additional snacks for their child to eat during snack time.

- No peanuts or nuts will be served. However, small traces of peanut or peanut oils may be in the snack items.
- Please notify staff of special dietary restrictions and food allergies. If your child has a severe food allergy, it must be listed on the participant's application.

*** Participants with special diets are encouraged to pack their own snacks.**

Policies and Procedures

Participant Sign In

Children are to arrive at the designated pick up area on the school campus no later than 10 minutes after school ends, failure to do so may result in your child being dismissed from the program. Staff will leave the school campus 10 minutes after school has ended. Staff will not return to the school for "late" pickups. Children walking from middle school must arrive within 20 minutes and sign in. No early supervision is available.

Participant Sign Out

- Participants must be signed out by an adult 18 years of age or older who is listed on the participant's application or by a parent, guardian or authorized adult.
- Parents or any adult authorized to pick up the child will be required to show identification.
- Once a participant is signed out of the program, the participant will not be allowed to return on that day.
- Parent/Guardians must sign out the participant immediately upon arrival to the site.
- Parents/Guardians will not be allowed to visit or stay with their child at the After School Program while the program is in session.
- Once a participant enters the After School Program site, they are considered to be part of the program that day. They will not be allowed to leave without being properly signed out.
- If a participant leaves the school on their own without being signed out, they will be expelled from the program.

Extracurricular Activities

Participants will be allowed to attend extracurricular activities that are held on site with prior written permission from the parent/guardian. Participants will be allowed to go to the activity after they have been signed in by staff. Participants must report back to the After School Program immediately after the activity ends. If the activity ends at or after 6:00 pm it becomes the parent's responsibility to pick up the child after the activity.

Absent Participant

If your child is going to be absent from the program on any day, you are required to call the Nakaoka Community Center at (310) 217-9537 by 12:00 PM that day. You must leave a message with a staff member letting them know your child will not be attending the after school program that day. No voice mail message will be accepted as notification. Failure to give notice of absences may cause for a dismissal from the program.

Parent/Guardian Behavior

- Any abrasive behavior by a parent/guardian displayed towards any After School Program staff member or participant may result in suspension or cancellation of care.
- Parents or guardians are not allowed to discipline or question children who are not their own at the program.
- If a concern arises, please ask to speak with staff or contact Supervisors directly.

Separated/Divorced Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/Guardians that are separated or divorced will need to provide copies of a signed court order if there are any restrictions regarding their child. Without a signed court order, staff will be required to release the child to either parent/guardian or whomever they authorize to pick up their child.
- Staff cannot get involved in personal matters. To avoid putting staff in a difficult situation, please do not share personal information unrelated to the After School Program with staff.
- Staff will not deliver messages between separated/divorced parents/guardians.
- Staff are not allowed to give out copies of After School Program documents (i.e. Accident Reports or attendance sheets).
- Any issues related to the child will be discussed with the adult who picks up the participant that day. Separated/divorced parents will need to develop their own method of sharing information.
- Parents/Guardians cannot visit with their child or make social phone calls to their child while they are at the After School Program to avoid any disruption of programming and allow participants to remain engaged in the program.

Staff and Participant Interaction

Staff members are not allowed to contact participants outside of program activities. This includes, but is not limited to letters, emails, social networking sites (myspace.com, facebook.com, twitter.com, instagram.com, etc.), telephone calls, text messages and visits. Staff members may not baby-sit, transport or walk home any program participants. Please do not put staff in an awkward position by asking them to baby-sit, transport or walk your child home.

Program Rules, Discipline Guidelines and Procedures

Our discipline procedure is very basic and allows participants the opportunity to choose a behavior that is most beneficial to their daily experience. When a participant makes a committed choice to not follow directions and refuse our methods of discipline, we have lost the ability to provide a good experience for that participant. In addition, it causes unnecessary interruptions for other participants and staff. We reserve the right to review each disciplinary problem based on the severity. Any participant who brings alcohol, drugs or weapons to the program will automatically be removed from the program without a refund.

It is program policy to discuss consequences and discipline of participants with their parent/guardian. The City of Gardena Recreation Department has the right to suspend a child from the After School Program if they feel the behavior is not conducive to maintaining a safe and wholesome environment, even if it is a participant's first offense. A participant may be required to be picked up early depending on the severity of rules broken. Refunds will not be given for suspension or expulsions.

After School Program Rules

The After School Program Rules include, but are not limited to the following:

- No physical fighting or intentionally causing physical or emotional harm to anyone.
- No use of profanity or inappropriate comments.
- No inappropriate behavior or gestures.
- No stealing, cheating or lying.
- Participant must respect After School Program and city property and supplies, as well as other participants' property.
- Participants must listen to all directions from the staff.
- Participants must respect staff and other participants.
- Participants must stay in assigned areas.
- Participants must keep their hands to themselves.
- No damaging or defacing of property.
- Participants must report to the After School Program directly after school.
- Participants must bring their own supplies and stay seated and quiet during homework time.
- Participants must not bring items from the "What Not to Bring List."
- No medical equipment, IV prescriptions, respirators, etc. are allowed in the facility.
- No weapons (including BB guns) or potentially dangerous objects such as bows, arrows, slings.
- No pets and animals allowed.
- No rough play such as tackle football, wrestling, etc. unless part of program activity.

Disciplinary Steps

Depending on the severity of the offense a participant may be immediately suspended or permanently expelled from the After School Program upon the first offense.

- **First offense:** Staff will inform participant of the rules that have been broken.
- **Second offense:** If the behavior persists, the participant will be asked a second time to discontinue their actions. In addition, they may be placed in time out or lose privileges. Time out lasts anywhere from 1 to 15 minutes and requires the child to sit quietly, apart from the group (within staff view). Staff will notify the parent/guardian. The conversation will be considered notification that your child is at the verbal warning stage.

- **Third offense:** If the same behavior or other disruptive behaviors continue to take place, causing a strain on the flow of activities for other participants, a Behavior Report will be issued. The Behavior Report will indicate what behavior occurred and the consequences associated with the behavior. The information will be discussed with the parent/guardian at pick up. The parent/guardian will be notified at pick up and will be required to sign the form indicating receipt of the notification of the incident. A participant may be required to be picked up early depending on the severity of the rules broken. If your child receives a Behavior Report; it will become part of their permanent file.
- **Fourth offense:** If there are further incidents, the participant will receive a suspension or expulsion from the program. The length of the suspension will be based on the severity of the offense. The participant will not be allowed to return to the program until the parent/guardian speaks with Supervisors. Supervisors will then grant or deny approval for the child to return to the program. Upon returning to the program, the participant will be placed on probation for the remainder of the program. If there are further incidents, the participant will be suspended or possibly expelled from the After School Program and any other city program. Parents/Guardians will not receive a refund if their child is suspended or expelled.

If your child receives a Behavior Report, it will become part of his or her permanent file. After School Program staff will not share the consequences of a participant with other parents/guardians. Depending on the severity of the offense, a participant may be immediately suspended or permanently expelled from the program upon the first offense. Physical assault, threats, fighting, possession of any type of item which may injure or harm anyone, theft and vandalism will not be tolerated. Any violation can result in expulsion.

When a Participant is Caught Fighting

If a child is involved in a physical fight with another participant or staff, the parent/guardian will immediately be called to remove their child from the program and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Bullying

Bullying is any intentional hurtful act, committed by one or more persons against another. Types of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical, verbal or relational and will not be tolerated. Any participant who is found bullying another participant will receive a time-out and a parent/guardian conference on the first offense. A second offense for bullying is grounds for a Behavior Report and suspension.

Verbal/Physical Intervention

Staff has a responsibility to maintain a safe and orderly environment for the public, program participants and for themselves while in City programs and at City facilities. In situations where harm might come to a member of the public, program participants or to staff themselves, staff is expected to intervene when they can and/or feel appropriately safe to do so. In the event staff does not feel safe, they are expected to contact the proper authorities (i.e. a Supervisor or Police Officer) immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

If a situation is escalating, or is occurring, staff is expected to *verbally* intervene when possible. If they feel safe to do so or as stated above, they will contact the proper authorities. Staff should not put their hands on a child or on any program participant or member of the public. However, in a situation where physical intervention is immediately necessary (i.e. to keep a program participant from harming themselves or another person), staff may physically intervene, only when absolutely necessary. If a situation such as this occurs at the program, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

Sick Participants and Medication Policies

Sick or Injured Participants

- If your child is exhibiting any sign or symptoms of illness, please be considerate to others by keeping your child at home. Consult a physician to determine if your child's symptoms are contagious and when they should return to the program.
- Our programs are not set up to handle sick participants. If your child becomes ill (especially with, but not limited to, fever or vomiting), you will be contacted to come and pick up your child immediately. If you cannot be reached, staff will contact someone on your authorized list.
- Keep your phone number and emergency contact numbers up-to-date.
- If your child receives a minor injury, such as a scraped knee, the staff will administer basic first aid (i.e., wash injured area and provide a Band-Aid or ice pack) and will inform you of the incident when you pick up your child.
- If your child receives a more serious injury, staff will take whatever steps are necessary to obtain emergency medical care if warranted. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Attempt to contact a parent/guardian to inform you and to give you the opportunity to take your child to a physician.
 - Attempt to contact you through any person listed on the emergency contact list on the participant's application.
 - If we cannot contact you, or your child needs immediate attention, we will call 911.
- Please do not send your child to the program if they have lice or chicken pox. If staff observe what appears to be lice in a participant's hair or what appears to be chicken pox, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, staff will contact someone on your authorized list. A letter will be sent to all parents/guardians notifying them of possible exposure to lice and/or chicken pox.

Medication Policy

Children may not be in possession of any medication while participating in the program. Should a child require medication during program hours, the parent is required to administer the medication. Staff will not be allowed to administer any medication.

Financial Information

Fees

City of Gardena After School Program is \$30.00 per week.

- Weeks that are short due to holidays are NOT Pro-rated
- NO REFUNDS will be issued for days not used during pre-paid weeks.

Payments

Payments at the parks are cash or check only. Payments at the Nakaoka Community Center can be made with cash, check, or credit/debit cards (convenience fees may apply). Payments can only be made by check if you are paying a minimum of 4 weeks in advance.

PAYMENTS ARE DUE ONE FULL WEEK IN ADVANCE (i.e. payments are due on Monday's; the payment that is made on Monday will be applied for the following week.)

In order to roll over a payment to a different week, you will need to notify the Nakaoka Community Center front desk or call (310)217-9537 at least 3 business days before the week they will be absent. If staff is not notified your payment will be forfeited. NO refunds will be given.

Note: If your check does not clear due to insufficient funds, you will be charged a \$25.00 bounced check fee (subject to change). The bounced check fee and the registration fees must be paid in person at our Finance Department within two business days. Payment must be cash, money order or credit card only. If payment is not received within two business days, your child will not be allowed to attend the program until fees are paid. If your check does not clear due to insufficient funds on two occasions, you will lose check writing privileges. Bounced checks that are not paid (including all charges) will be sent to the L.A. District Attorney Bad Check Restitution Program.

Late Fees

Payments made on Tuesday will have a \$5 late fee applied. Payments made on Wednesday will have a \$15 late fee applied. If no payment is received by Wednesday, your child will not be able to attend the program the following week.

Tax ID Number

The City's Tax ID Number is 95-6000713. After School Program staff are not allowed to sign any documents for reimbursement from employers. Please contact the Registration Office at (310) 217-9537 to obtain any signatures required for reimbursement.

