



# *Therapeutic Recreation*

Parent / Guardian  
Handbook



### **The Therapeutic Recreation Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to provide persons with disabilities in the Columbus, Georgia community with lifetime learning experiences in recreation, training in adapted sports and fitness, creative and fun leisure skills.

### **Admission**

Participants must be 18 years of age or older with a disability in order to participate in the Therapeutic Recreation program. Parents/ Guardians are responsible for completing and returning the admission packet forms one (1) week prior to participation in the Therapeutic Recreation programs. Admission packets are to be updated annually. If any information changes prior to this expiration date, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update this information as soon as possible.

Therapeutic Recreation does not provide personal assistants or one-on-one instruction, assistance, or services to participants. Participants must be capable of independently going through the basic functioning skills required for daily programming or the program scheduled. Participants that require one-on-one assistance or that suffer from acute medical conditions must have a parent/guardian, nurse, or another authorized assistant attend programming with the participant. This assistant must stay with the participant at all times.

### **Hours of Operation**

The Therapeutic Recreation regular program hours are Monday – Wednesday from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm, and Thursdays 2:00 pm until 4:00 pm. There may be special programming, special events, and/or field trips that are scheduled outside of regular program hours. Monthly newsletters will note these dates and times if applicable.

### **Late Pick Up & Early Drop Off**

Program hours are listed in the monthly newsletter. If participants are not picked up after scheduled program end time, late fees will incur as follows:

*There will be a ten (10) minute grace period from the established ending time*

11-20 minutes after program end time    \$10.00 per participant

21-29 minutes after program end time    \$20.00 per participant

\$10.00 per each additional ten (10) minutes late

If you are more than thirty (30) minutes late and the staff has not been able to reach you or anyone authorized to pick up your participant, a TR staff member will contact the Division head office who will in turn contact the local police.

In addition to late pick up, participants are not to be dropped off any earlier than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the program start time.

- 1<sup>st</sup> instance will result in a verbal warning.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> instance will result in a written warning.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> instance will result in a one (1) day suspension.
- 4<sup>th</sup> instance will result in a one (1) week suspension.

If early drop off persists after the aforementioned have been utilized, the participant will be suspended from the program for one (1) month.

### **Holiday Schedule**

Therapeutic Recreation will offer programming on the following holidays, with a minimum of six (6) participants' reservations:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Memorial Day  
4<sup>th</sup> of July  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Veteran's Day  
Christmas Eve  
New Year's Eve

Therapeutic Recreation does not operate on the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

### **Newsletters & Reservation Forms**

Newsletters are released every month and may be picked up at Pop Austin, sent home with participants, mailed home, or printed from the Therapeutic Recreation website. Please read through every newsletter carefully and keep a copy handy so that you are aware of the scheduled programming as well as the details (if any). **Recreational** programming is selected based on the needs and/or interests of participants as an entirety. Keep in mind that due to the varied ages, abilities, and functioning levels of each participant, every program may not be appropriate for every participant. Staff will do their best to encourage participants to engage in some way with the scheduled program, whether it is adapting as needed or simply offering a related alternative. While we would like for all to gain the benefits of Therapeutic Recreation programs, we will not force participants to engage in activities that they refuse and will discuss program selection(s) with parent(s)/guardian(s).

Each newsletter includes a reservation form for that month's programming. Parents/guardians are required to complete and return a current reservation at least two (2) days prior to the first marked program date. Any fees associated must be paid and accompany the reservation form. We ask that any cancellations be made as soon as possible, at least one (1) day in advance if possible.

**Fees**

There is no admission fee to join the Therapeutic Recreation Division. Therapeutic Recreation charges fees for transportation and late pick up. These fees are to be paid to: *Columbus Parks & Recreation*. Transportation fees are due two (2) days before the first reserved program date and must be accompanied by a completed reservation form. Field trips are offered occasionally and all participants are encouraged to attend based on interest. Any fees that are associated with the field trip are the responsibility of the participant and will be advertised with details in the monthly newsletters. Money for lunch/food (if required), souvenirs, etc. is also the responsibility of the participant.

**Medication**

Therapeutic Recreation staff does not administer medication. If possible, parents/guardians are asked to schedule medications before or after program hours so that they may be taken at home. If a participant requires medication during regular program hours, the participant must be able to dispense his or her own medication.

**Inclement Weather**

In the event of a severe weather threats, transportation will be suspended as well as any scheduled outdoor programming. Program will still operate on site when/if possible. If non-emergency city offices remain open and operating, you may assume that the program is still scheduled. In the event of any sort of cancellation, staff will contact only those that have turned in reservation forms for that specific program day.

**Lunch**

Therapeutic Recreation does not provide lunches or snacks to participants during the day. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pack a lunch for participants that attend daily programming. It is encouraged to use cold packs in lunch boxes, as there is not enough room in the refrigerator for everyone's lunch. There are microwaves on site to warm food if needed; please send participants with pre-cooked meals. Staff cannot cook meals for participants and/or travel to buy lunches. If participants prepare their own lunches, please check to be sure that it is edible (i.e. expiration dates, molded foods, etc.). We also ask that participants pack all utensils needed such as napkins, plastic forks, spoons, etc. Therapeutic Recreation occasionally hosts or attends luncheons where lunch is provided. The newsletters will note these details.

**Personal Belongings**

The Therapeutic Recreation will not be responsible for lost, misplaced or stolen items. Please do not send your participant to the Therapeutic Recreation programs with expensive items, sentimental items or large sums money (if not required for programming). Please mark your participant's personal items with their name.

**Sign In/ Sign Out**

Parents/ Guardians must sign participants in and out with a complete signature and exact time on the sign in/out sheet. Participants will not be released to anyone other than a parent/guardian or individual authorized on the registration form. Pick up by anyone under the age of 18 is not allowed.

When you sign participants in and/or out each day, please check for any up to date information or notices at the sign in/out counter. Please check for newsletters, flyers, posters, brochures, or any other information pertaining to Therapeutic Recreation.

### **Discipline Policy**

Our Therapeutic Recreation staff will maintain a positive approach to managing a participant's behavior. The safety of all participants is priority. Our staff will help participants resolve their conflicts and concerns through discussion, consequences, and behavior plans. If we have special concerns regarding your participants' behavior, the staff will contact you to discuss the situation.

Every effort will be made to help the participant understand the inappropriateness of their behavior. When the conflict is between two (2) or more participants, the staff will facilitate interactions to overcome the conflict.

No staff member will ever strike, abuse, use profanity or threaten with physical intimidation of a participant or parent/ guardian.

No staff member or participant will be allowed to damage Therapeutic Recreation property.

### **For non-aggressive/ disruptive behavior, the plan will be as follows:**

- Discussion of the behavior with the parent(s)/ guardian(s).
- Development of a behavior modification plan if one does not currently exist.
- Utilization of behavior modification techniques such as but not limited to: positive reinforcement, shaping, chaining (linking like behaviors together for a positive end results).
- Utilization of social skills training techniques such as but not limited to modeling, practicing and coaching.
- Utilization of time out techniques.
- Review of plan with parent(s)/ guardian(s).

### **For aggressive behavior, the plan will be as follows:**

- Discussion of the behavior with the parent(s)/ guardian(s).
- Development of a behavior modification plan if one does not currently exist to be utilized when the participant returns from suspension.
- Utilization of behavior modification techniques such as but not limited to: positive reinforcement shaping, chaining (linking like behaviors together for a positive end result).
- Utilization of social skills training techniques such as but not limited to modeling, practicing and coaching.
- Utilization of time out techniques.
- First instance, one (1) program day suspension from all programs.
- Second instance, five (5) program day suspension from all programs.
- Third instance, one (1) month suspension from all programs.
- Fourth instance, three (3) month suspension from all programs.
- If the behaviors continue after a three (3) month suspension, the participant will be suspended from all programs indefinitely.

A review of status for a participant for whom the Behavioral Policy has been activated will be established one (1) year after the incident that resulted in the activation of the policy. At that

time, the participant, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and Division staff member(s) will meet to discuss the progress of the participant and determine direction for involvement in programs. This may include re-setting the policy if no further behavioral incidents has occurred.

### **Abuse Policy**

Providing quality care to our participants is important to us at Columbus Parks and Recreation. We want to ensure their health and safety by protecting them from abuse and neglect. Some examples of how we can protect them are:

- Thorough backgrounds checks of all employees, and volunteers.
- Allegations or suspicions of abuse are taken very seriously and will be reported accordingly. All staff must report cases of suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect to the proper authorities. Therapeutic Recreation is a mandated reporter.

### **Illness Policy**

If a participant becomes ill, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the participant. If necessary, participant will rest in an isolated area until picked up. Fever, diarrhea and vomiting are indicators that your participant should not attend Therapeutic Recreation programming.

Participants with communicable diseases will not be allowed to attend Therapeutic Recreation programs until they are free of disease or until they are no longer contagious as determined by a doctor's note. Parents/guardians should be considerate of others when deciding whether or not to bring their child to programming. Parents/ guardians will be notified when their participant has been exposed to a communicable disease.

### **Emergencies**

For minor injuries, a staff member will perform minor first aid, contact the parent/guardian and if needed, have the parent/guardian or authorized person(s) pick the participant up. If the injury warrants immediate attention, 911 will be called to secure medical treatment for the participant. Parents are responsible for any expenses resulting from an injury (EMS Team, hospital, doctor, medicine, medical supplies, etc.) It is recommended that participants enrolled should have medical insurance coverage through personal insurance coverage.

### **Dismissal from the Program**

With the approval from the Parks and Recreation Administrative Office, the Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor may request that a parent/guardian remove his or her participant from the program. Reasons may include by are not limited to the following:

- The parent/guardian refuses to follow the Parks and Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Division Policies and Procedures as described in this handbook and in contract of services which is signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) when registering their participant(s).
- The participant is unable to adhere to the Therapeutic Recreation Division rules concerning discipline and/or behavior.



## Receipt for Therapeutic Recreation Parent/ Guardian Handbook

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I have received a copy of and understand the Rules and Regulations of the Columbus Parks and Recreation – Therapeutic Recreation Division. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies of this division.

Parent/ Guardians Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardians Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_