FRANKFORT
Park District

Prairie Care Parent Handbook

Grand Prairie Elementary School
10480 Nebraska St.
Frankfort, IL 60423
815-464-2887 or 815-464-5579
kmorrison@frankfortparks.org
Tax ID# 36-2673904

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3

- Purpose
- Procedures and Programming
- Dates and Hours
- Location
- Arrival and Departure

Page 4

- Registration (Priority & General)
- Fees and Payments
- Autopay

Page 5

- Schedule Change
- Late Pick-up
- Shoes
- Absences
- Personal Belongings
- Emergency Medical and Health Policies

Page 6

- Behavior Requirements
- Remedy Procedures

Page 7

- Discharge Policy
- Communication
- Cell Phones
- Weapons Policy
- ADA
- Inclusion Support

Page 8

- Phone System

Page 9

- Signature Approval

PURPOSE

Prairie Care is a License Exempt program that complies with the requirements established by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for license exemption. The objective of Prairie Care is to provide a safe, recreational-focused environment for children whose parents or guardians need to work or pursue further education. The program is overseen by qualified staff dedicated to fostering positive and supportive relationships with the children. Prairie Care offers a creative and engaging setting where children can learn, develop, and flourish at their individual developmental stages.

Please note: The Park District is mandated by state law (70 ILCS 1205/8-23) to conduct criminal background checks on all applicants. This includes obtaining criminal history information for all prospective employees. Under this law, any applicant with a conviction for offenses listed in subsection (c) of the statute will be automatically disqualified from employment consideration. Convictions not listed in that subsection will be reviewed in relation to the specific job responsibilities and will be considered during the evaluation process.

PROCEDURES AND PROGRAMMING

All Prairie Care participants are required to complete a Prairie Care Packet, which includes essential information such as emergency contacts, waivers, and related documentation. Completed packets must be submitted prior to commencing participation in the Prairie Care program. All files will be securely stored in accordance with applicable data protection protocols. All forms will be retained and destroyed in compliance with the Local Records Act (50 ILCS 205). Participant information will be used solely for program-related purposes and will remain confidential; sharing of information with other participants is prohibited without prior authorization.

The Frankfort Park District reserves the right to modify any procedures and programming associated with the Prairie Care program as necessary.

DATES AND HOURS

Regular hours of the program will be from 6:30 AM until school begins and then from the end of school until 6:30 PM. Check your contract sheets for special services on half days of school. ALL BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS WILL FOLLOW THE SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY ON SNOW DAYS…… **CLOSED.**

LOCATION

Prairie Care will be held at Grand Prairie School. Students from Chelsea School will be bussed to and from their school to Grand Prairie School. Our main room for drop-off and pick-up will be the lunchroom.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Children must be accompanied by an adult when arriving at and departing from the program. A "Sign-In" sheet will be available in the morning, and a "Sign-Out" sheet will be provided in the afternoon. An adult is responsible for signing children in and out of the program. If someone other than a parent or guardian is designated to pick up your child, please ensure their name is listed on your registration form. Valid identification (such as a driver's license or state ID) will be required to verify their identity. Children will not be released to individuals without prior authorization from the parent or guardian. All participants must provide contact information for an emergency authorized pickup person to complete registration for the Prairie Care program.

REGISTRATION

You may register at the Frankfort Park District at 140 Oak Street, Monday – Friday between 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. There is also an after-hours locked drop box located at the 140 Oak Street address.

Emailed registrations are only accepted through registration@frankfortparks.org. Fillable forms are available on our website under the tab *Programs and Registration Information > Prairie Care*. Once you have completed the fillable form, save it and email it to registration@frankfortparks.org. **Photographs of registration forms WILL NOT be accepted; only PDFs. Staff should be provided with a credit card on file for emailed registration calendar forms.** Parents are encouraged to keep a set schedule for the sake of the staffing schedules and your child's safety.

Each child attending Prairie Care must have a separate registration form completed at the time-of-service requested. Monthly calendars have been provided for your convenience; please indicate the days your child will attend.

PRIORITY FULL YEAR REGISTRATION

Due to high demand, Prairie Care is implementing a Priority Full Year Registration period for participants registering for four or more days per week. **To ensure your spot, please register for the entire school year and enroll in an automatic payment plan.**

GENERAL FULL YEAR REGISTRATION

After priority registration has passed other participants may submit their General Full Year Registration and sign up for the auto payment plan to ensure your spot for the school year. **To ensure your spot, please register for the entire school year and enroll in an automatic payment plan.**

You may submit your schedule monthly if submitting a full year's schedule isn't possible. You will be expected to meet a monthly deadline. *Registration will be confirmed based on availability, and participants will be notified by email if a specific day has reached capacity*.

FEES, PAYMENTS AND PENALTIES

Fees are based on requested days. Please refer to current registration forms for detailed payment information.

AM Fee - $15 per day
PM Fee - $20 per day
Early Dismissal $30 (4:00 pm pick-up)

Discounts are available for District 157C employees.

Please Note:

- Fees are non-refundable in the event of non-attendance.
- Late registration will not be accepted.
- Failure to make scheduled payments may result in suspension or permanent removal from Prairie Care.

AUTOPAY

All participants signing up for the full year registration will be required to sign up for autopay.

Please note: Your payment will be charged to your credit card on the first day of each month of service (August payment will be at the time of registration).

SCHEDULE CHANGE

Any add-on days/changes to your registration calendar will need the approval of Prairie Care Staff. Add-ons to the monthly calendar will incur a **$25 surcharge per transaction plus the regular fee**, based on availability. A change request form must be submitted for any changes throughout the school year.

LATE PICK-UP

For late pick up, a $25.00 fee will be charged for the first 15 minutes you are late after 6:30 pm. After 15 minutes, one dollar for every minute thereafter will be charged. We will set our clocks with the school district clocks. The school district asks that after 8:00 am or prior to 3:30 pm, no cars should be in the bus loop. You may use the parent parking lot or the main parking lot.

SHOES

Prairie Care will adhere to the school district's policy regarding the use of non-marking shoes exclusively in the gymnasium. Children must wear appropriate footwear to participate in gym activities; those not wearing proper shoes will not be permitted to play. For safety and cleanliness reasons, children are not permitted to remove their shoes and run in stocking feet.

ABSENCES

It is the Parent's responsibility to report absences to Prairie Care. It is not the school district's responsibility to take messages for Prairie Care. Call before 8:30 am at 815-641-2458. You may leave a message on the answering machine. There is no pro rating of fees due to non-attendance.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Personal belongings such as toys, handheld games, phones, sports equipment, etc. should not be brought to Prairie Care, unless Prairie Care has arranged a special day for items, such as ***Tuesday Electronics Day (additional days added in the winter months)***. If these special scheduled days become problematic, changes will be made. The staff/Frankfort Park District will not be held responsible for the children's personal belongings.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND HEALTH POLICY

Prairie Care is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children. In the unlikely event of an injury or accident, the following procedures will be followed:

A. We will contact you to inform you of the situation. If you are unreachable, we will notify the emergency contacts you have provided.
B. For serious injuries, trained medical professionals will be called to provide care.
C. If your child requires medical attention, we will accompany them to the nearest healthcare facility.
D. You are expected to meet us at the medical facility as promptly as possible.

Please refrain from bringing children to Prairie Care if they are ill or have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. Additionally, children should not attend Prairie Care if they exhibit symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, runny nose, conjunctivitis (pink eye), or other contagious conditions. If we become aware of a contagious illness affecting participants, such as COVID-19, chickenpox, strep throat, lice, or pink eye, we will notify you promptly while respecting confidentiality. A medical clearance note will be required for your child to return to Prairie Care after illness or contagious conditions.

If a child becomes ill during care, we will contact a parent or guardian to arrange immediate pickup. If the parent or guardian is unavailable, an emergency contact will be notified. Ill children will be isolated in a designated area and must be picked up without delay. Parents should be prepared to arrive within 20 to 30 minutes. Failure to pick up a sick child in a timely manner may result in discharge from the program.

ALL CHILDREN MUST BE TOILET TRAINED AND BE ABLE TO INDEPENDANTLY USE BATHROOM FACILITIES. PRAIRIE CARE STAFF WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ASSIST PARTICIPANTS IN BATHROOMS. CHILDREN MAY NOT WEAR PULL -UPS. IF A CHILD HAS A TOILETING ACCIDENT, A PARENT WILL BE CALLED TO PICK UP THEIR CHILD IMMEDIATELY.

BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

Discipline is implemented to support your children's development of self-control and responsibility for their actions. It is conducted with kindness and firmness, grounded in four core guidelines:

A. A child must not disturb or harm others, either verbally or physically.
B. A child must respect property and not damage equipment.
C. A child must avoid placing themselves in dangerous situations.
D. A child is expected to listen to and respect staff members.

REMEDIAL PROCEDURES

Staff will guide children toward more appropriate activities or redirect their focus to positive behaviors. Encouragement will be provided to help children resolve conflicts independently, along with assistance to foster mutual understanding.

- Staff will address inappropriate language by encouraging children to communicate kindly. Persistent use of inappropriate language, such as excessive swearing, will be discussed with both the child and the parents. Continued issues may result in the child's temporary removal from the program for the day.

- A common challenge involves name-calling and verbal hostility among children. In such cases, children will receive a verbal warning, followed by a time-out or separation. If inappropriate behavior persists, the child may face suspension from the program.

- Discipline is a shared responsibility between staff and parents. If a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior is identified, all staff members will be informed to collaboratively develop and implement an individualized behavior plan.

- The Recreation Supervisor may consult with the child's school and parents to address ongoing concerns and gather additional insights.

- Prairie Care has established a formal system of written warnings for inappropriate conduct, such as hitting or using foul language. The child will receive a written warning, which must be signed by the child, parent, and staff member. After three warnings, in consultation with you and your child, the child will be suspended from the program for one day. Repeated infractions could lead to permanent removal from Prairie Care.

In cases of severe misbehavior, immediate suspension or dismissal may occur without prior warnings, depending on the circumstances.

DISCHARGE POLICY

A child may be discharged from Prairie Care if any of the conditions outlined below occur. Discharge is considered a last resort and will be implemented only when the issue poses an immediate threat to the safety and well-being of participants or significantly impacts the quality of program operations.

1. Submission of falsified admission records or incomplete documentation.

2. Actions by the participants that jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others, including staff and fellow participants, and where established behavior management strategies have proven ineffective. This includes inappropriate behavior, actions, or language.
3. Repeated failure to follow transportation policies, such as failing to notify the program when the child will not attend
4. Repeated late or missed payments in violation of established policies and deadlines.
5. Repeated late pickups by parents or guardians beyond the designated after-care time of 6:30 p.m.
6. The child's needs are incompatible with the program's capacity or resources.
7. Any other violations or concerns deemed significant by Prairie Care staff that compromise the safety, well-being, or operational integrity of the program.

COMMUNICATION

Communication efforts will be implemented through a variety of ways. Letters or emails from the Recreation Supervisor will be sent home, as important information needs to be addressed.

Talking to the staff daily is another means of communication. If you have any concerns please call the Recreation Supervisor, Kristen Morrison, at 464-2887 or 464-5579. You may also reach me at kmorrison@frankfortparks.org

CELL PHONES

Cell phones will not be permitted at Prairie Care. If they are bringing phones to or from school, they should always be in their backpack during Prairie Care. If a cell phone is seen outside of their backpack, it will be taken away until the end of the day. If the child needs to contact the parent in an emergency or vice versa, they may use the Prairie Care phone. The Prairie Care cell phone number is 815–641–2458. If the child cannot adhere to the phone or technology rules, they will be dismissed from the program.

WEAPONS POLICY

The Park District maintains a strict policy prohibiting the possession of weapons at all facilities, properties, and events sponsored by the District. For the purposes of this policy, weapons include both visible and concealed items, regardless of whether the owner holds necessary permits. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, explosive materials, and any other objects that could be used to threaten, intimidate, or cause harm to individuals, employees, managers, or supervisors.

ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Frankfort Park District and School District 157C are committed to making reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities. Parents are encouraged to share any relevant information that may assist Prairie Care in delivering appropriate and effective services to their child. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to inform the park district of any medical, physical, or mental conditions that may necessitate special considerations. All shared information will be handled with confidentiality.

INCLUSION SUPPORT

Inclusion support is intended to create the most accessible environment while offering participants meaningful opportunities to engage in park district programs through reasonable accommodations. Prairie Care will collaborate with staff from Lincolnway Special Recreation Association to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations. If your child requires inclusion services, it is necessary to complete the designated forms provided by the park district to initiate a review of your child's needs. Please allow up to two weeks for this process. Once the review is complete and a determination has been made, Lincolnway Special Recreation Association will contact the parent or guardian to discuss the recommended course of action regarding your child's needs.

Prairie Care Phone System

Prairie Care currently has two phones:

- Office Phone # - 815-464-2887
  You may leave a message on the office phone answering machine. The office is closed between 8:30 am – 2:30 pm.

- **Prairie Care Cell Phone # 815-641-2458**

The Prairie Care cell phone serves multiple purposes, including as an alert system and a means of access to the building. When staff members hear the phone ring, they will respond by opening the door or providing a buzz to admit you for drop-off or pick-up. You must enter the Prairie Care facility (cafeteria) to sign your child in or out. Please refrain from ringing the Grand Prairie office bell to request admittance to Prairie Care.

We recommend saving both contact numbers in your phone for convenience.

If you have any questions regarding the phone system, please contact Prairie Care or the park district office staff.

Prairie Care Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook outlining the policies of the Prairie Care Program and it meets with my approval.

Signature Date