



Gurnee
Park
District

CARE Parent Handbook

2026-2027

Welcome to Gurnee Park District CARE program for the 2026-2027 school year. CARE (Children Active in Recreation for Enrichment), offers children an opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational activities outside the school environment. CARE allows children the opportunity to express themselves through a variety of activities that include crafts, games, sports, science, special events, supervised play, and quiet time for reading and homework. With these activities, we anticipate an environment where your child will learn and develop social and interpersonal relationships.

In order to provide the best possible program for our participants, the children are expected to respect the staff, the facilities, the equipment, and one another. Please read the information provided to you in this handbook and other materials that are handed out throughout the year.

Included in this handbook is our philosophy, objectives and important information about the CARE program. This information will help prepare your child for the program and help answer any questions you may have. If there are additional questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for choosing the Gurnee Park District CARE program. We are looking forward to serving your needs.

Respectfully,
Megan Baird
Youth Recreation Supervisor
847-599-3746

Important Phone Numbers

Gurnee Park District Main Office 847-623-7788

CARE Sites:

Hunt Club AM/PM CARE Cell Phone 847-815-5021

Viking Park AM CARE Cell Phone 224-548-0124

River Trail PM CARE Cell Phone 847-815-5025

School District 56

847-336-0800
Prairie Trail School 847-623-4333
River Trail School 847-249-6253
Spaulding School 847-623-3701
Viking Middle School 847-336-2108
Transportation 847-336-8997

School District 50

847-856-3590
Primary 847-856-3620
Elementary East 847-856-3650
Elementary West 847-856-3630
Intermediate 847-856-5900
Middle School 847-856-3400
Transportation 847-856-3644

Gurnee Park District Staff

Mayerlin Cruz Montes, 847-599-3764
Youth Program Coordinator

Megan Baird, 847-599-3746
Youth Recreation Supervisor

Sabrina Hinkens, 847-599-3767
Youth Program Manager

Melissa Marsh, 847-599-3756
Director of Recreation

About the Program

The CARE program is committed to identifying and meeting the needs of school age children. The program is relaxed and recreational based, so the school day is not duplicated, however, the program observes similar rules to those in both school districts. The qualified staff will remain sensitive and flexible to meet both the physical and emotional needs of the children as well as the needs of the parents.

The primary goal is to provide each child with a safe, enjoyable and enthusiastic environment. This goal is accomplished by offering a variety of materials and recreational activities that promote enjoyment, exploration, creativity and learning. The program is designed to enhance each child's development physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

CARE offers each participant a time to play, learn, and develop skills in a recreational setting that enables participants to interact socially. The activities provide both a structured and non-structured atmosphere.

Daily activities include organized games, crafts, supervised play, quiet time, and snack time. Organized games and crafts are led by the CARE. Staff. Supervised play, gym, playground, or indoor activities allow the children to play freely with their friends while counselors are interacting with them. Quiet time is a time for the children to do homework, read or participate in a quiet activity on their own. Please keep in mind that the counselors will help answer questions, but not correct homework assignments, as this is the responsibility of the parents. Counselors will not be able to provide one on one tutoring.

Please note this program or the facilities are not licensed or regulated by DCFS.

CARE Locations

For District 50 (Woodland) Students

Hunt Club Park Community Center—920 N. Hunt Club Road

Enter through the front entrance. Our program is held in the Activity Center.

- This program is for Woodland Students only

For District 56 Students

River Trail School— 333 N O'Plaine Road

Use main entrance (you will need a code to enter after 3:00p) and proceed to the Multipurpose Room/Cafeteria

- This program is for students who attend River Trail, Spaulding School, Prairie Trail, and Viking Middle School Schools.
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Viking Park—4374 Old Grand Avenue

Use Dance Hall entrance – This program is for District 56 students only.

- This program is for District 56 students only K-5th grade

The Staff

The CARE staff consists of the Youth Recreation Supervisor, Youth Program Coordinator, Site Directors, and Counselors who are high school, college age, and adults.

Daily activities are planned and supervised by the CARE staff. The ratio of participants to counselors is 10:1. Staff members have attended staff training, and are First Aid, CPR, and AED certified.

A Site Director and counselors are assigned to each site. All staff work as a team in all activities, projects, and events at CARE.

Drop Off/Pick Up

AM CARE: The doors open at 6:30 a.m. Parents/guardians must bring their child into the CARE site and sign their child in every day. It is required to note the time of arrival.

PM CARE: Parent/Guardian must enter the building and sign out their child every day. Please record the time your child is picked up. Children cannot be dismissed without being signed out. Anyone who is picking up a child must be authorized to do so on the ePACT Information Form and must present a picture I.D. that will be checked by a staff member. Staff members will not release a child to someone who is not on the ePACT Information Form.

ePACT INFORMATION FORM

An online ePACT Information Form must be completed and submitted to the Gurnee Park District prior to your child starting CARE. This form includes those adults authorized to pick up your child, phone numbers to reach parents, and any special needs or accommodations. Instructions on how to complete the online ePACT Information Form will be emailed to you.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

All children must be signed in and out each day by a parent or other adult over the age of 18 authorized on the ePACT Information Form. Anyone whom the staff are not familiar will be asked to show identification. Children may leave only with those who are listed on the ePACT Information Form.

LATE PICK UP POLICY

We ask that you observe your scheduled pick up time. One warning will be given if your child is picked up after their scheduled time. Thereafter, you will be charged a \$10.00 late fee per child for every 15 minutes or fraction thereof when you or your authorized pick up person is late. Continued late pickups risks having your child dismissed from the program.

Please note: Should you be more than 30 minutes late for your first late pick up, you receive a warning for the first 30 minutes, and late fees will be assessed at \$10 for each 15 minutes thereafter.

We understand that emergencies may occur, so if you find yourself in such a situation, please call the group cell phone. This courtesy will alleviate anxiety on the part of the staff and your child. A late fee will still occur. We understand your required work time and respectfully ask that you respect our required work time.

ABSENCES

If your child is ill or unable to attend the program, please call or text the program (number listed on page 2). When calling or texting in an absence, please state your child's name and the date of the absence. Parents are also responsible to contacting the school to report their child's absence.

If a child is not feeling well, **DO NOT** bring them to this program. Children who have been out for a long period of time due to illness may only return with a note from their doctor stating that it is safe for them to participate in the program. Please refer to our Health Policies on page 8 for further information if your child is sick.

Late Starts – District 56

CARE is in session on late start days and these days are included in the monthly fee for those enrolled in the before school CARE program. There is a separate Wednesday only option for those who just need to attend the before school program on Late Start days.

Early Dismissal

CARE is in session on early dismissal days and these days are included in the monthly fee for those enrolled in the after school CARE program. Please include a lunch and a beverage on these days if school is not providing lunch. CARE staff will notify you of these days. District 50 – There is a separate Friday only option for those who just need to attend the after school program on Fridays.

School's Out Kids Club

There are special Days Off Programs scheduled when School District 50 and 56 are not in session. Please see the Programs & Events Guide, or visit our website at www.gurneeparkdistrict.com for those dates and activities. A separate registration form and payment is required. Days Off programs are for children in K-6th grade. There are limited spaces, so please register early.

School's Out Kids Club includes a themed day supervised play beginning at 6:30 a.m. organized games, and crafts. Pick up time is no later than 6:00pm. Children should bring a lunch, water bottle and appropriate outerwear.

Note: The fees for School's Out Kids Club are not included in the regular CARE fee.

School Closings/Inclement Weather

CARE programs follow School District Calendars. CARE will not be in session on days when schools are closed due to inclement weather or emergencies i.e. snow days. Refunds are not issued as these days will be made up during the school year. NOTE: while we strive to provide CARE for every school day, the park district reserves the right to not hold the CARE program if it interferes with our other childcare programs (i.e. summer camp).

What to Bring

ATTIRE:

Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing for indoor and outdoor activities. CARE will make use of outdoor facilities as much as possible.

SNACK/LUNCHES

A daily snack will be provided in after school CARE, however, children are able to bring their own snacks. On Early Release Half Days, children need to bring a lunch and beverage with them.

Breakfast is not provided during AM CARE. Participants are welcome to bring breakfast items and eat while at morning CARE.

Children may be enrolled in our programs with severe allergies, as a result it may be necessary for us to ask that you do not send certain food items. The staff will communicate with the parents as needed.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

Please do not have your child bring toys, video games, Nintendo DS Systems, trading cards, cell phones, cameras, iPods, or other related personal items to CARE. The Gurnee Park District is not responsible for any trades, lost, stolen or broken items that result from children bringing their belongings to CARE. Please label all clothing. There is a lost and found at each site. We do allow students to bring their school appointed iPad/Chrome Book to use for homework.

Parents are asked to call their child's CARE site cell phone number listed on page 2 when trying to contact their child or staff during program hours.

The Gurnee Park District is not responsible for any trades, lost, stolen or broken items that may result when bringing personal items to CARE.

Health/Emergency Information

Parents will be asked to complete an information form via ePACT. This form will ask about any allergies your child may have, as well as if your child will need to be given medication during program hours. If medication is to be given during program hours, a separate Dispense Medication Form must be completed and uploaded to the ePACT Information Form. Instructions on how to complete the ePACT Information Form will be emailed to you after registration. Children may not attend CARE unless an ePACT Information Form is completed.

If a child displays signs of illness during CARE they will be isolated from others and a parent or authorized pick up must come within 30 minutes.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

All CARE staff are CPR, 1st Aid and AED Certified. Staff will administer first aid when necessary. If your child is injured or ill and requires more than basic first aid, we will first attempt to contact the parent/guardian, before calling any listed emergency contacts. If staff is unable to reach any contacts listed on the ePACT Information

Form, staff will call 911 when the situation requires more aid than we can provide. All steps will be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of your child. **If the injury is serious, the paramedics will be called immediately.** If an injured or ill child is transported by ambulance to the local hospital, a staff member will stay with the child at all times until a parent or guardian arrives.

FOOD ALLERGY PROCEDURES

Parents will be asked to complete an information form via ePACT. This form will ask about any allergies your child may have which includes an allergy plan. If your child will need to be given medication (Benadryl or Epi Pen) during program hours you will need to complete a Dispense Medication Form.

- Any food provided by the Gurnee Park District will be peanut/nut free
- Children will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before eating
- Children with peanut/nut allergies will sit at a designated peanut-free table
- All staff goes through epi-pen/training
- Children with allergies must complete the Allergy Action Plan by answering the questions on ePACT
- Please make counselors aware of any food allergies and/or food restrictions your child may have. While we understand there are many types of food allergies and restrictions, the Gurnee Park District cannot accommodate every child's dietary need.

MEDICATION POLICY

If medication is to be given at before and/or after school or if your child has allergies requiring medication, a separate Dispense Medication Release Form must be completed. You will be asked to upload this form to ePACT.

- If parents make note that their child has a special need that requires medication (asthma, food allergy) the Gurnee Park District MUST have that medication at CARE no matter how mild the condition may be in order for the child to attend
- Prescription medication must be brought in its original container and labeled with the child's name
- **Please only send daily dosages**, as we cannot be responsible for an entire prescription
- Please hand any of the above necessary medication to a Gurnee Park District employee for it to be placed in the appropriate location. Do not give it your child.
- Staff will NOT administer shots or injections to children (Note: Staff are only allowed to administer Epi-Pens)
- The Gurnee Park District reserves the right to not administer medication which is considered an unreasonable accommodation

Behavior Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of each parent to discuss the code of conduct with their child, and reinforce compliance with it.

All children and parents are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times while at the Gurnee Park District. While your child may not wish to participate in a specific activity, he/she is still expected to make an effort to be a part of the program.

Please be aware that any violent, physical or threatening words/actions will receive an immediate conduct report and may result in suspension or removal from the program. Firearms are not permitted on any facility premises.

Children or parents who are a danger to themselves or others, use inappropriate language or actions, or who are physically aggressive or threatening may be dismissed from the program. Gurnee Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior, or that of his/her parent, is inappropriate or endangers the safety of himself/herself or others. The following guidelines are designed to provide safe and enjoyable activities for all.

Children shall:

- Show respect to all other children, staff and property
- Take direction from staff
- Refrain from using abusive or foul language
- Refrain from causing bodily harm to self, other children or staff
- Show respect for equipment, supplies and facilities
- Bullying is not permitted or tolerated

A positive approach will be used regarding discipline. Gurnee Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of themselves or others and/or if inappropriate behavior does not stop, and/or if the behavior negatively affects the experience of other participants. Physical restraint of a child will only occur if the child is putting themselves or others in immediate danger.

Any participant breaking the code of conduct will:

1. Be given a verbal warning by the staff accompanied by a discussion about why their behavior is not appropriate
2. Be given a time out by the staff that is equal to the child's age after the unacceptable behavior has been discussed with the child
3. Loss of Privilege: The staff member will remove the child from an activity of the staff's choice (for one day) after the unacceptable behavior has been discussed
4. A conduct report will be given to the child after the unacceptable behavior has been explained. A discussion with the parent/guardian will accompany this level of discipline.
5. Gurnee Park District reserves the right to call parents for immediate pick up if the child is harming themselves or others or if unacceptable behavior continues.

Bullying is repetitive and/or habitual behavior used to tease, threat, and abuse, intimidate or aggressively dominate others. Bullying is not permitted in any fashion at CARE. Bullying and any violent, physical or threatening actions will receive an immediate conduct report and may result in a suspension or removal from the program.

Upon receiving three conduct reports, the Recreation Supervisor will contact a parent or guardian to arrange a meeting to discuss corrective measures and disciplinary action. If additional conduct reports are issued, a one to three day

suspension and/or dismissal will occur.

The Gurnee Park District reserves the right to immediately dismiss or suspend a participant whose behavior endangers the safety of themselves or others, or if the behavior negatively affects the experience of other participants. No refunds will be issued.

Inclusion/ADA

The Gurnee Park District complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. We agree to make reasonable accommodations for participants with special needs. If your child needs any special accommodations, please contact the Gurnee Park District so we may make the necessary arrangements.

Special arrangements are made through Warren Special Recreation Association. WSRA also assists with behavior problems that may arise with participants. You may call Warren Special Recreation Association at 847-244-6619 for more information.

Payment Policies

Payments will be made month to month via auto-debit. Participants will pay the 1st month's payment at the time of registration. This payment covers the first month of CARE. The payment plan requires each installment due by the 15th of each month beginning with September 15, 2025.

A late fee of \$10 will be charged if payment is not received by the 15th of each month.

Payment is based on the total number of days in the school year divided into 9 equal installments. The days in August and June get absorbed into the 9 month installments. If a child is withdrawn at any time during the school year the monthly fee is not refundable and will not be pro-rated for partial month attendance. You will not be charged for future months your child does not attend.

Payments are accepted from a third party such as the State, YWCA or any other financial aid contributor. Even in these situations, the participant's portion of the payment and the deposit needs to be paid in advance.

Any questions concerning billing? Call Kim McCormack at (847) 599-3751.

Refund/Withdrawal Policy

Registration in the program is a minimum of one month. After one month, written (email) or verbal notice of withdrawal from the CARE or Preschool CARE Programs must be submitted to the Youth Recreation Supervisor no less than one week before the child's discontinuation in the program. No prorated fees will be given for partial month's attendance or withdrawal.

If you withdraw your registration before the start of the program you may be subject to a \$10 cancellation fee. No refunds will be given if a child is absent from school and does not attend the CARE or Preschool CARE Program.

If you choose to have your child be absent from the program for vacation or personal reasons, it will be necessary to continue to pay the fee to retain their place in the program. If you do choose to withdraw, it is necessary to re-register for any available space that may exist.

Tax Identification Number 36-2712925

The Park District will provide copies of your payments for taxing purposes. These forms are available at the Park District at the end of January 2026. You can obtain these forms on our website when you log into the registration page or you can call the office at 847-623-7788. For work reimbursements, please have the Youth Recreation Supervisor, Megan Baird sign your billing statement.