



PARENT/CAREGIVER HANDBOOK 2025/26



PORTLAND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Portland Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department is to enhance the quality of life through people, parks and programming while creating lasting memories for the citizens of Portland and its visitors.

PROGRAM VALUES

- We value children's thoughts, feelings, and ideas. We show this by listening and seeing all the children and supporting them with their problems and concerns. Along with helping them to be successful at the program.
- We view each child as a unique individual with something special to offer. We show this by referring to children by the name they wish to be referred to by and learning about interests, school life, family life, and anything else they wish to share.
- We create an environment where the focus is on the interests and needs of children. We show this by offering game/activities/projects/events at the program that the children find fun and are developmentally appropriate for their age.
- We aim to create an environment to support the growth and learning of children and adults, along with celebrating everyone's strengths. We do this by having staff members and children use the skills that they are good at as much as possible, and also coach and guide the staff team and children to other ways of doing things and support them to make these changes.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Portland Parks, Recreation & Facilities
212 Canco Rd
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Portland, Maine 04103
297-808-5400
recreation@portlandmaine.gov

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Director of Recreation
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207-808-5439

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207-808-5454

Jane O'Connor
Recreation Inclusion Supervisor
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207-808-5437

Jordan O'Donal
Recreation Leader
Riverton Community Center
odonali@portlandmaine.gov
207-874-8455

Christiana Viney
Community Center Leader
Reiche Community Center
cviney@portlandmaine.gov

**BEFORE AND AFTER THE BELL
LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFO:**

Presumpscot School
69 Presumpscot Street
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-3205
presumpscotrec@portlandmaine.gov

Lyseth School
175 Auburn Street
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-4105
lysethrec@portlandmaine.gov

Rowe School
23 Orono Dr
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-0593
hallrec@portlandmaine.gov

Reiche School
166 Brackett St
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-1099
reicherec@portlandmaine.gov

**AFTER THE BELL LOCATIONS AND
CONTACT INFO:**

Talbot School / Riverton
1600 Forest Ave
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-0517
rivertonrec@portlandmaine.gov

Longfellow School
432 Stevens Ave
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-3455
longfellowrec@portlandmaine.gov

East End School
195 North St.
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-3443
eastendrec@portlandmaine.gov

Ocean Ave School
150 Ocean Ave
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-3599
oceanaverec@portlandmaine.gov

Peaks Island School
126 Island Ave*
Cell Phone Contact #:207-653-1102
peaksislandrec@portlandmaine.gov
*The After the Bell program takes place
at the Peaks Island Community Center

HOURS OF OPERATION

Before the Bell:

Presumpscot, Lyseth, Rowe and Reiche

Before Care: 7 a.m. until school starts

***Due to the earlier start time at four elementary schools, Before the Bell is not available at those sites.*

After the Bell:

Talbot, Longfellow, Ocean Ave and East End: 2:10 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Presumpscot, Lyseth, Rowe and Reiche: 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

***Please note on Early Release Wednesday each site begins care one hour early.*

Peaks Island: 3:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Early Release Wednesday: 12:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

The children participating in the program are brought from the Peaks Island School to the Peaks Island Community Center for After the Bell Program.

READINESS SKILLS

Portland Recreation aims to include everyone in the department's programming offerings to the community. However, not every person may be successful within some of the environments we create for the programming needs of the community. To ensure the safety and enjoyment of all our participants, everyone attending the program must be able to perform the following readiness skills:

1. Participate independently or with reasonable accommodations/modifications.
2. Take and follow directions and instructions from a staff member and be open to changing what they are doing to keep the group safe and welcoming to all people.
3. Interact and participate in a manner that is physically and emotionally safe for themselves and others.
4. Maintain personal care without the support of recreation staff.
5. Stay with their assigned group throughout the program's duration or safely request a break from the group where staff can see/hear them and the rest of the group.
6. Follow the department's behavior expectations, which include being safe, respectful and responsible.

If a participant's behavior is something that causes immediate risk of harm or is directed at another child, staff member, or another person based on a protected characteristic the participant parent/caregiver will be told to immediately come and pick up the participant. Then the staffing team will assess if the participant is able to return to the program.

NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Portland Recreation provides its services, programs and activities to all children and families without regard to race or color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by law. Children with physical or mental disabilities will be reasonably accommodated, as long as such accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity, pose a direct threat to self or others, or result in an undue burden.

WECOMING SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Our program is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants, staff, and families. Discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated and will be addressed promptly and seriously. We prohibit discrimination or harassment on the basis of, but not limited to:

- Race or ethnicity
- Color
- National origin
- Religion or creed
- Gender, gender identity, or gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Disability (mental or physical)
- Age
- Socioeconomic status
- Body size or appearance
- Family status or structure

This applies to all participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors during all program activities, both on- and off-site.

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will mean that the person is not showing the following Readiness Skill.

- Interact and participate in a manner that is physically and emotionally safe for themselves and others.

RECREATIONAL STAFFING

All the staff at the program are at different parts of their journey through life. The leadership team has picked the best individuals to be part of the teams that aim to support all children to have a safe and exciting experience.

All staff complete, mandated child abuse and neglect training, first aid/CPR/AED training, and complete 15- 25 hours of in-house training to give them the tools to keep camp safe and support children to be successful.

If you have any questions about the staffing of the program please reach out to the Rec Supervisors. They oversee the program and work with each school site team to provide the best positive experience for the children and their families.

Ryan French - 207 808 5454 - rfrench@portlandmaine.gov

REGISTRATION

Registration takes place in early July and is ongoing throughout the year based on site availability. Because many of our sites fill very quickly, we encourage families to register early. If a site fills, families are encouraged to put their child's name on a waiting list where it will remain throughout the current school year. It is the family's responsibility to contact us with updated information if their address or phone number changes. Please call and remove your child's name from the waiting list if you are no longer interested in a space. This allows us to reach those who are interested sooner. Moving from the waiting list to the actual program depends on the hiring of additional staff and securing additional space, when necessary. Online registration for Before and After the Bell takes place online at our MyRec website ([Click Here](#)), in person at the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Office, via US Mail to the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Office at 212 Canco Rd, Suite A, or via fax at recreation@portlandmaine.gov. All information, including required signatures and payment information, must be provided at the time of registration. **Incomplete registrations will not be accepted.** Once sites are near or at capacity, registrations can take place only at the Recreation Office.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The City maintains a fee waiver process for individuals who do not qualify for other assistance. The City's fee-waiver form requires information and documentation about your financial situation. All submissions are held in strict confidence, unless required to be released by law. After review of your completed application, you will receive a letter informing you if your fee waiver request has been accepted, and if so, at what level (10%, 50% or 100% of the fee waived). Participants who require fee waivers must have a fee waiver application on file with current financial information in order to apply for admission to the program. New application forms are available at the beginning of February. We encourage you to apply early so you don't miss the opportunity to participate because you are submitting the form too close to registration and are waitlisted. Unfortunately, we are unable to hold spots so please apply early. Grant of a fee waiver does not guarantee admission into the program. Fee waivers may be available during the school year based on changed financial circumstances.

PAYMENT

For any payment or outstanding balances related questions or concerns please email Emily Collins - ecollins@portlandmaine.gov

WITHDRAWING OR CANCELING

After reserving a space, if you choose not to send your child to the program, please let the Recreation office know as soon as possible. You must notify the Rec Supervisors in writing with 5 working day notice (Mon-Fri). You will be responsible to pay the next week's fee for withdrawals/cancellations without proper notification.

Email the Rec Supervisor to give us these notice or hand in/mail written notice to

Before/After the Bell
212 Canco Road
Portland
Maine
04103

Ryan French - rfrench@portlandmaine.gov

FEE FOR LATE PICK-UP

The Before and After the Bell Program ends at 5:30 p.m. There is a late fee of \$1 per minute beginning at 5:31 p.m. The charge for the late fee will automatically be added onto the next weekly payment without additional notice. A child may be withdrawn from our program if late pick-ups are consistent. If a parent/guardian or other authorized adults listed on the pick up list are not able to be reached or pick the child up by 6:00 p.m., Portland Police will be contacted.

ABSENCE FROM PROGRAM / NOTIFICATION

If your child is absent from school or your child isn't attending the program, please email or call the site phone/text and leave a message with the children's name, date, and group the children is in (k-1 or 2-5)

MORNING CHECK IN PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of parents to bring their child into the morning Before the Bell site. Many of the school buildings are locked before school so it will be necessary to call the Recreation cell phone number to let the Recreation staff know you are at the entrance. Parents of those children that walk or ride their bikes to school will also need to call the Recreation cell phone number to let the Recreation staff know their child is on their way. Upon arrival into the program, children are checked in by digital attendance. During morning care, children play quiet games, color or read in preparation for school. Children are released to school personnel at the designated start time.

AFTERNOON CHECK IN / OUT PROCEDURES

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CHECK IN WITH A STAFF MEMBER BEFORE APPROACHING YOUR CHILD AT THE PROGRAM. STAFF NEED TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE BEFORE ENTERING THE SPACE WHERE THE CHILDREN ARE PLAYING

At the end of the school day, children are walked by school department staff from their classrooms to the Recreation staff waiting at the designated check-in area for After the Bell Program. Once attendance is taken children will start their after care activities which may include free play, snacks, outside / inside organized play and free time. Parents may pick their children up at any time once After the Bell Program begins. Children enrolled and attending the Before and After the Bell Program are not permitted to leave the school buildings or grounds unless they are signed out by a parent or authorized person on their pick-up list. **Once a child is picked up they may not return to the program.** Parents / guardians are encouraged to name as many authorized persons as they wish when registering for the program. Authorized persons must be over 16 years of age.

Parents / guardians and other authorized persons picking up children will be asked to produce identification until all site staff are familiar with them. Please remind anyone new picking up your child to bring identification with them to the program.

You can update your MyRec account to add adults to your pick up list. Ask a staff member at the program to help you with this or email one of the Rec Supervisor.

In order for a child to walk or bike home we require a signed [permission slip](#) be on file. This should be requested from the Rec Supervisor.

COURT ORDERS

Please be aware that, in the case of separated or divorced parents, we are unable to restrict one parent's right to visit or pick up a child without a current court order. If a child is the subject of any court order, Portland Recreation must have a copy of the most recent version, signed and with a judge's seal, included in the child's file at the Recreation Office. This includes orders regarding guardianship, parental custody, restraining orders, or any other orders relevant to the child's enrollment or pick up from the program.

TRANSPORTATION

Children will not be transported in Recreation employees' personal vehicles at any time.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE BELL IMPORTANT DATES

The Before and After the Bell Recreation Care Program operates according to the Portland School Department District calendar. Please check the school calendar for starting and ending dates, school closings, and early dismissal days. There will be no program on snow days or school closing days. ([Click Here for the 2025/26 Portland Public School Calendar](#)).

The After the Bell Recreation Program is offered on parent / teacher conference days (at no additional cost).

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- All clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, and personal items should be clearly marked with your child's name. A change of clothes kept in backpacks is helpful, especially for younger children.
- Please do not send personal items to the program such as toys, money, stuffed animals, games, etc. We are not responsible for any misplaced, damaged, or stolen items.
- Cell phones and electronics are **NOT** allowed. This includes smart watches that give participants access to the internet and/or games.
- It is suggested that children come with outer layers and footwear for outside activities depending on the weather and temperatures.
- For cold/winter weather, we suggest hats, mittens, coats, snow pants, and boots. For cool weather, sweatshirts, pants, and a hat.
- Children could be outside unless the temperature feels like less than 13 degrees F or over a temperature that feels like 97 degrees F.

SNACKS

A healthy super snack is provided by the food services program of the Portland School Department to those sites where at least 50% of their students qualify for free and reduced lunches. For those sites that do not qualify, parents will need to send healthy snacks for their child. If your child has specific dietary needs or any food-related allergies which are not met by this program, then you will need to provide a snack for your child.

It is strongly encouraged that your child is sent with a refillable water bottle each day that is labeled with their name. Water filling stations / drinking fountains are available for children to refill water bottles. Soda, energy drinks, high sugar drinks, caffeinated drinks and candy are strictly prohibited. We appreciate your cooperation with this request.

MEDICATION AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Meeting the health needs of children in the Before and After the Bell Program may occur during programming hours. Some children have needs that include asthma, diabetes, life-threatening allergies, and seizure and other disorders. Meeting these and other health care needs, injuries and accidents during recreation activities requires pre-planning, staff training, and established protocols to minimize injuries and accidents. Medication administration may be required during these times to support the child in their health management.

It is the policy of the City of Portland Recreation Department that participants' medication be administered by a parent at home wherever possible. The department also recognizes that some children have health conditions that require administration of medication during the day, including at times during the Before and After the Bell program hours.

If your child needs to take a medication or carry a medication you must reach out to the Inclusion Supervisor.

Jane O'Connor Recreation - Inclusion Supervisor - joconor@portlandmaine.gov - 207-808-5437

HOW TO REQUEST INCLUSION SERVICES

The City of Portland Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management Department is committed to providing interested participants equal opportunities in, and access to its recreation programs. The Department, as part of its mission, provides inclusive programming in an open and welcoming atmosphere.

Qualified individuals with a disability are encouraged to request reasonable accommodations to allow them to participate in public programs and services by the Department. The Department will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability, so long as the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program, pose a direct threat to others, or otherwise impose an undue burden on the city.

If your child needs to take a medication or carry a medication you must reach out to the Inclusion Supervisor.

Jane O'Connor Recreation - Inclusion Supervisor - joconor@portlandmaine.gov - 207-808-5437

PARENT AND RECREATION STAFF COMMUNICATION

Regular communication with your child's recreation staff is essential to a successful Before and After the Bell experience. The child benefits most when both the recreation staff and parent make their best efforts to have open communication. Staff do not always have time for extended conversations at pick-up, but are happy to arrange a time to meet before or after the program, when needed. Our staff appreciates parents who keep us informed of their child's needs or any transitions taking place in their life. This helps the staff remain sensitive to your child's needs. Feedback is essential to our program, please share your thoughts with us. **Please make every effort to keep your household profile updated with any changes to contact information, address changes, and emergency contact information.**

Please visit our website [HERE](#) and update your account.

PARENT/CAREGIVER BEHAVIOR

The Before and After the Bell Program is designed to afford children, families and staff a safe, respectful and dignified environment. Disrespectful, threatening or aggressive behavior on the part of parents or caregivers disrupts the safe and respectful operation of the program. This includes verbal and/or physical abuse or threats of such abuse. As such, parents or other family members or designated adults, who engage in such behavior towards staff or program participants, will be asked to cease participation in the Before and After the Bell program immediately.

ILLNESS

If a child is too ill to attend or is prohibited from attending school due to an illness or medical condition, **they should not attend the Before and After the Bell Program**. If your child becomes ill during the program, a parent / guardian or authorized person will be called to pick up your child earlier than scheduled. We ask that you make every effort to pick up your child within 30 minutes of notification by Recreation staff.

We believe the first consideration should always be for the comfort of the child, even if their symptoms do not exactly fall into these categories. If you believe your child has a cold or flu, they should stay home and rest. **If you believe your child has COVID it is imperative that you test your child and follow current CDC protocols for treatment and isolation.**

For the safety of all children and staff, parents / guardians are expected to report to Portland Recreation staff directly and immediately if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. As always, Portland Recreation respects the confidentiality rights of children and families if and/or when we find it necessary to notify other participating families of the detection of communicable diseases within the program environment.

If your child shows two or more of the following symptoms, we recommend your child NOT attend the program:

- Serious headache
- Coughing, sneezing, runny nose
- Sore throat
- Pulling at ears
- Itching
- Upset stomach, nausea
- Mild skin rashes of a confined area
- Changes in eating or drinking habits (excessive thirst, loss of appetite)
- Unusual behavior (cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, seems not well)

If your child shows any of the following symptoms they may NOT attend the program:

- Diarrhea (abnormally loose stool per day)
- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Severely runny nose
- Vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Skin/eye lesions or rashes which are severe, weeping or pus-filled, including chickenpox
- Whites of the eyes are severely red; indicative of pink eye
- Evidence of lice

If a child attends the program, and we notice any of these symptoms, we will contact a parent to pick up their child. Your child should stay home until these symptoms cease and must be symptom free for 24 hours before they return to the program.

LICE

Lice is very common in school-age children. You should keep your child out of the Before and After the Bell Program until **all signs** of the adult lice and their eggs are gone from your child's head and clothing. We would appreciate a call when you discover that your child has lice, so we can determine if we need to contact other families in the program. If families are contacted, names will be kept confidential.

MOVIES

G and limited PG rated movies and other videos are sometimes incorporated into the activities during programs. They are used primarily on half days and / or during inclement weather days.

RELEASE TO AN IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL

The Before and After the Bell Program prohibits the release of a child to an individual suspected to be impaired due to drugs, alcohol or other causes. The Recreation staff reserves the right to refuse to release a child to anyone under the suspicion of impairment. Should a dispute occur regarding release in such a circumstance, the Portland Police Department will be called to make the final decision.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Portland Recreation has developed an Emergency Plan for response to emergencies or other traumatic incidents which may occur during program hours. This plan was developed in accordance with best practices and coordinated with the plans followed by the Portland Public Schools for individual locations. Emergency drills will be conducted regularly to ensure staff and participants are prepared in the event of an emergency.

FIELD TRIPS

As part of the program, staff may plan walking trips to parks close by the schools or nearby programs. Permission slips with specific trip information will be distributed. Those children without permission slips will not be permitted to participate.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of life threatening emergencies, a member of our staff will immediately call 911 and, if needed, administer first aid and CPR. We will notify you as soon as possible. If you cannot be reached, your designated emergency contact will be notified.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Recreation employees are mandated reporters. We are required by law to report immediately to the police and DHHS any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, child neglect or exploitation.