City of Capitola Recreation Department
Guidelines for Camp Leaders

The City of Capitola and the Capitola Recreation Department set high standards and guidelines for our programs and staff, reflecting the City’s Mission Statement (see attached). The recreation department Mission Statement is as follows: The Capitola Recreation Department’s mission is to enhance the leisure lifestyle and quality of life for the people of Capitola through recreational activities and opportunities. The department is committed to providing equal employment opportunities and affordable, fun, integrated, and safe recreational activities to people of all ages, genders, races, and ability levels. The department has a commitment to excellence, and continually strives to improve its programs, procedures, and services, to best meet the needs and interests of the community.

The following are general guidelines meant to assist you in further understanding our expectations during the course of the Camp Capitola program:

- At all times conduct yourself in a professional, responsible manner, keeping in mind that you represent the City of Capitola and Capitola Recreation and our programs. Every Camp Leader is a part of creating the vision and values of the Camp Capitola program, including integrity, respect, honesty, healthy living, self-esteem and pride. Your conduct should reflect the fact that you are a role model for the children and that they are very influenced by what you say and do.

- At all times be neat, clean, and dressed appropriately for the program.

- You are expected to be on time (as defined by your Coordinator) and at work every day, and to stay at the end of the day until the site is clean, equipment has been put away, and the children have been picked up. Being consistently late is cause for dismissal.

- Unless agreed upon at the beginning of the season, the program is not designed to accommodate vacations or days off. You accrue Sick Time at a rate of every 30 hours worked for 1 hour of sick time as part of your employment. If you are sick or know you are going to be late, please call or text the Coordinator and let him or her know.

- The Coordinator is your direct Supervisor. You are expected to follow the guidelines and instructions given you by this office and by the Coordinator. The Coordinator has the authority to hire staff and to work with the City to discipline and fire staff if necessary.

- You will receive a performance evaluation from the Coordinator during the summer.

- If you are having problems or frustrations, communicate with the Coordinator. It is helpful if you can propose a solution or state clearly what you need when you talk with the Coordinator.

- Immediately ask for clarification if you don’t understand something asked of or said to you.

- If any situation is beyond your ability to handle, immediately send someone to get the Coordinator.

- Always work cooperatively with other staff.

- If a child shows up in your group and he or she is not on your roster, you should bring that child to the Coordinator, who will check in with the recreation office.
• Be aware that children (and parents) are always watching you and overhear your comments and conversations. At no time should a staff person use foul language or gestures; use tobacco, vape products, or marijuana while on the job; chew gum; talk about partying; or show up to work hung-over or under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the illegal use of prescription medications.

• Employees must be aware that summer staff are known and recognized in the community, and their off-duty behavior should be consistent with the values of the City and the department.

• Committing any illegal act is prohibited while on or off duty. If an employee is arrested or cited for a misdemeanor or felony offense, he or she must notify the Coordinator or the recreation office within 24 hours. Notification will continue through the chain of command up to and including the City Manager and Police Chief.

• Maintain appropriate “boundaries” with the children. You are there to meet the children’s needs, not to have them meet yours. They are children under your supervision, not “buddies.” Leaders should also take particular care in maintaining appropriate physical and emotional boundaries when working with the Junior Leader teenagers to prevent inappropriate contact with a minor that could result in trauma to that child and a sexual harassment lawsuit.

• All employees are to be treated with respect and dignity, free from harassment or discrimination.

• Instructors should also maintain appropriate boundaries with each other, and with their Coordinators to create a working environment free of sexual misconduct or harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when it occurs in the workplace. EEOC guidelines define sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions, conduct of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Unwelcome is the critical word; sexual conduct is unwelcome whenever the person subjected to it considers it unwelcome. Be aware that you can also be held accountable for actions outside of the program that may affect your co-worker at the program.

• Treat all children with respect. Create an atmosphere that honors the uniqueness of each child and his or her contribution to the group. Every child has positive qualities and strengths - find them - and work to bring out the best in each child.

• Each Instructor will be responsible for a group of children who will check in with you each morning and check out with you at the end of the program. Each program should have a drop-off/pick-up agreement for each child; no child is to be dismissed without the responsible party checking him or her out. If someone who is not approved to pick up a child shows up to pick him or her up, refer the person to the Coordinator before releasing the child.

• *Children must be supervised at all times,* including trips to the bathroom and drinking fountain. Plan these breaks in your day, and keep children orderly as they go to and from the activity and the restroom or fountain. Leaders are to be present at all assigned activities during the time that activity is in progress. Leaders should be actively involved in every activity, and should know where all the children in the group are at all times. A Leader should not leave an activity without prior permission from Coordinator. However, Leaders should not ever be in the bathroom at the same time as campers.
Participant Discipline: Please follow these guidelines in dealing with disciplinary problems:

- **Never:** yell at a child; try to shame him or her into doing what you want him or her to do; ridicule, make fun of, tease, disparage, belittle, or call a child names; be sarcastic to a child; or use physical force in disciplining a child.

- Physical exercises, such as running laps, should not be used as “punishment.”

- The only instances in which it is appropriate to physically move a child are: (a) to separate two (or more) children who are physically fighting, and (b) to remove a child from immediate physical danger.

- If a child has simply been misbehaving by being disruptive to an activity, talk to the child and encourage the appropriate behavior. If the child requires one-on-one attention, and it is possible for you to do so, inform another Leader and make sure the other children in your group are supervised while you talk to the child. Don’t make assumptions about why the child is behaving the way he or she is - ask. Find out what’s going on. Listen. What is the child saying? Is he or she bored, sick, having problems at home? Explain what’s not ok about his or her behavior and why; tell him or her that this behavior is affecting the whole group. Try to involve the child by giving him or her a special task, or asking him or her to assist you in some way. If you are unable to deal with the situation, get the Coordinator. It is always appropriate to bring a child or a group of children who are being disruptive to the Coordinator.

- The Coordinator should be informed of all behavioral problems, even minor problems you deal with on your own.

- Work with the Coordinator to fill out an incident report for behavioral problems. The written log is VERY important in helping the Coordinator and Recreation Supervisor deal with a parent of a child whose behavior is a problem. Children who are consistently disruptive will be removed from the program.

If parents approach you occasionally with concerns, listen, acknowledge their concerns, tell them you will pay attention to their concerns and make appropriate corrections. If a parent consistently approaches you, tries to involve you in lengthy discussions and/or interferes with your duties, inform him or her that you hear what they are saying, but you are responsible to run activities and keep the children safe and your focus has to be on the group. Refer that parent to the Coordinator.

Parents are very concerned these days about child abuse and abduction. Be aware of any suspicious people hanging around the program, and intervene if anyone approaches a child or group of children. Always take it seriously if a child reports a strange or inappropriate interaction with an adult or with another child, whether he or she is part of the program or not. Report any of these circumstances to the Coordinator and, if at the beach, the lifeguard staff, who will notify the Police Department.

The recreation department is required by law to report any instances of suspected child abuse. If a child makes reference to any type of abuse, makes inappropriate comments to other children, talks about being hit at home or talks about siblings being hit or hurt, or if you notice suspicious bruises or other injuries, follow the guidelines given you in the Mandated Reporter packet.

The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) is the law; we are required by this law to provide integrated participation in our programs for all participants. Integration is the key word. The Coordinator of your program will review guidelines with you for incorporating these children into your programs; if you are having problems with this, ask your Coordinator for more direct assistance.

First Aid: Each site is supplied with a first-aid kit so minor injuries can be easily treated. **If you do perform any first aid, always make sure you follow the protocols for blood and bodily fluids.** If a child is injured or involved in an accident, quickly assess his or her condition and immediately send
someone to inform the Coordinator and/or the recreation front office staff of the situation and of the seriousness of the child’s condition. Stay with the child, continue to assess his or her condition, comfort the child and keep him or her calm. Keep the other children away, and have another Leader assist you if necessary until the Coordinator arrives. Administer CPR, rescue breathing, and/or any other basic first aid in which you are trained (control of bleeding, shock, stabilization of body, etc.). Once the Coordinator arrives, be of assistance in whatever ways you can. If you are at the beach and the City lifeguards step in, take direction from them. Follow up by filling out an Accident Report with the Coordinator.

• Facebook & Social Media: All staff must be sensitive as to what they post on Facebook and other social media sites. Summer staff must realize that readers of these sites or blogs will view the employee as a representative or spokesperson of the program and the City of Capitola. Further, a staff person could create a situation in which another staff person feels harassed because of an embarrassing post, and this could lead to a lawsuit. In light of this, we require staff to observe the following guidelines when referring to the program, its activities, its participants, its volunteer leaders, and/or other staff, in a blog or on a website:

  o Staff should not communicate online with children involved in the program.
  o Staff must be respectful in all communications and blogs related to or referencing the program, its participants, and/or other staff and volunteers.
  o Staff must not use blogs or personal websites to harass, bully, or intimidate other staff or participants. Behaviors that constitute harassment or bullying include, but are not limited to, comments or images that are derogatory with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color, or disability; sexually suggestive, humiliating, or demeaning comments; and threats to stalk, haze, or physically injure another employee, volunteer or participant.
  o Staff must not use blogs or personal Web sites to discuss engaging in conduct that is prohibited by the City’s policies, including, but not limited to, the use of drugs and alcohol, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, and bullying.
  o Staff should be extremely aware of what photos they post online of themselves and any other program staff, particularly photos of partying or which are sexual in nature.
  o Staff must not use obscenities, profanity or vulgar language. Staff must not use blogs or personal Web sites to disparage the City, the program, program participants, or other staff.

• Cell phones: Staff should not use cell phones during work hours, unless the use is work-related.

• Hazardous Materials: If you find any kind of hazardous materials, including such things as needles or drug pipes, DO NOT touch them. Block off the area, and inform the Coordinator who will inform the Police Department. If you find it first thing in the morning before other staff have arrived, you may call dispatch at 471-1141 and report it.

• Failure to perform to standard, as outlined in these guidelines will result in employee discipline, which may include: written warning, suspension, or termination, depending on the frequency or severity of the misconduct.

  Thank you for your cooperation!
  We look forward to a great summer!