



PALS

PLAY AND LIVE STRONGER

Afterschool Program

Parent Handbook

2019-2020



Mission Statement

To promote diverse community-based recreational opportunities by providing a variety of programs, services, facilities, and natural spaces to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Vision Statement

Addressing the lifelong leisure needs of all Vernon Hills residents.

Goals

1. To provide recreational opportunities that promotes physical and creative experiences outside of the classroom.
2. To provide a quiet atmosphere and assistance allowing children to complete their homework.
3. To provide quality care and a fun environment.
4. To promote socialization among the children.
5. To provide nutritional snacks before and after school.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is self-directed using interest and discovery areas. The activities incorporate all aspects of child development: social, emotional, physical and intellectual. Group activities, arts and crafts, gym/outdoor play, quiet time for homework, and snack are all a part of our program each day along with other interesting projects.

Important Contact Information

Vernon Hills Park District 847-996-6800
Sullivan Center
635 N. Aspen Dr.
Vernon Hills, IL 60061

PALS North:
Jocelyn Rios, Site Supervisor 847-219-1985
jocelynr@vhparkdistrict.org

PALS Townline:
Sean Chatterjee, Site Supervisor 847-975-9735
seanc@vhparkdistrict.org

PALS South:
Maureen Hilliard, Site Supervisor 847-769-2683
maureenh@vhparkdistrict.org

PALS Aspen
Shannon Thomas, Site Supervisor 224-522-2329
shannont@vhparkdistrict.org

PALS Recreation Supervisor:
Anna Swain, Sullivan Center 847-996-6805
annas@vhparkdistrict.org

PALS Location

PALS North

PALS North is located at Hawthorn Elementary North, 301 Hawthorn Parkway, Vernon Hills, IL 60061

- PALS North is for students attending Hawthorn Elementary North only

PALS Townline

PALS Townline is located at Townline Elementary, 810 N. Aspen Drive, Vernon Hills, IL 60061

- PALS Townline is for students attending Townline Elementary and Hawthorn School of Dual Language only
- Drop Off and Pick Up for PALS Townline will take place in the cafeteria of Townline Elementary. When approaching the building from the parking lot, parents will drop off/pick up down the stairs to the right.

PALS South

PALS South is located at Hawthorn Elementary South, 430 N. Aspen Dr., Vernon Hills, IL 60061

- PALS South is for students attending Hawthorn Elementary South only
- Drop Off and Pick Up for PALS South will take place on the North entrance of Elementary South (side entrance, facing the playground)

PALS Aspen

PALS Aspen is located at Aspen Elementary, 500 N. Aspen Drive, Vernon Hills, IL 60061

- PALS Aspen is for students attending Aspen Elementary only
- Drop Off and Pick Up for PALS Aspen will take place on the west side of Aspen Elementary (back of the building)

Hours of Operation & Signing In/Signing Out

AM PALS Program:

The AM program opens at 6:00 am.

Parents/guardians must bring their child/ren into the PALS program and must sign their child/ren in every day. Please also record the time you are dropping your child off at PALS.

PM PALS Program:

The PM program begins with the dismissal of school.

Parent/guardian must enter the building and sign their child/ren out at the Sign In/Out area.

Please also record the time you are picking your child up from PALS.

All children must be signed out before they can leave the program.

If a PALS instructor is unfamiliar with any person picking up a child, the PALS instructor will ask to see a picture ID before the child is released. If the person picking up the child refuses to show ID the child will not be released.

We ensure each family a safe and secure environment for their child. Security measures are taken at each facility to protect all the children in our care.

PALS Data form

Before being able to attend the PALS program, each child must have an up-to-date Data Form on file.

This form includes important information about your child, such as phone numbers, authorized pick-up, emergency contacts and medical information.

Anyone picking up must be listed as an authorized pick up person on the PALS Data form and must present an ID that will be checked by a PALS instructor. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent, guardian, or person listed on the child's data form, unless the child's parent contacted PALS prior to pick up time.

In the case of divorce or single parent families, it is important to indicate who the custodial parent is. The custodial parent may be required to provide the PALS Site Supervisor with a copy of legal documentation. This document will be kept confidential in your child's file. No information regarding a child or family will be released without a signed release from the parent.

Late Pick-Up Policy

PALS closes at 6:00 PM. While we understand that parents may occasionally run late in the afternoon in picking up their child, PALS faces staffing issues when parents are late. Therefore, after a 5 minute grace period, you will be charged a late pick up fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes you are late in picking up your child. This is a per child fee. The late fee must be paid in full before the child can return to the program. If you are later than one hour after the program ends and the PALS Site Supervisor is unable to contact anyone on your Emergency Contact list, the local police department will be called and you must pick your child up from the police department.

No School Days

PALS is not in operation during Hawthorn District 73 school institute days, selected holidays and winter/spring break (please refer to Hawthorn District 73 'At A Glance Calendar'). You will not be charged for PALS for no-school days. The Vernon Hills Park District offers a 'School's Out Program' for some no- school days. This program requires a separate registration and fee.

Early Release Days

Please refer to your Hawthorn School District 73 'At A Glance Calendar' to see a list of early release dates. Hawthorn School District 73 has six early release days during the school year. These early release days are included in the PALS fees.

No refunds will be issued for absences!

School Closings

If Hawthorn School District 73 is closed due to inclement weather, our PALS Program will be closed as well. Emergency situations may arise requiring the program to adjust their hours of operation or close for the day. Some of these emergencies may include:

- Loss of power in the building
- Temperature problems in the facility
- Weather

Refunds are not issued, as these days are made up during the school year. For a list of School Closing Make-Up Days, please refer to Hawthorn District 73 'At A Glance Calendar'.

Field Trips and Transportation

The PALS Program does not take field trips as part of the regular program.

Tuition Policies

Payments will be made month to month.

Participants will pay the 1st month's fees at the time of registration. This payment covers the first month of PALS. Installment charges will be processed on the 20th of each month, beginning September 20, 2019 through April 20, 2020 and must be made through an auto-debit from a credit/debit card.

The days in August 2019 and June 2020 get absorbed into the 9 months installment.

Absences

Refunds will not be given for illnesses, extracurricular activities, and disciplinary reasons or for other temporary childcare arrangements. If your child will be absent from PALS, please contact your Site Director immediately. It is your responsibility to inform the Site Supervisor if your child is not attending PALS! If your child will be home due to illness, we ask for your cooperation in notifying us of any communicable illness.

Schedule Change/Cancellation to Program

Changes to a child's attendance at the PALS Program is subject to availability.

Changes to days of attendance or changes between full-time and part-time attendance, requires a PALS Cancellation/Change Form. Changes will become effective on the 1st of the following month. The PALS Cancellation/Change Form must be submitted to the PALS Recreation Supervisor no less than one (1) week before the 1st of the month.

There is a \$10.00 fee per participant for any changes to enrollment.

The Cancellation/Change Form can be picked up at the Sullivan Center, from your Site Supervisor or by email request from the Recreation Supervisor.

One Week Grace

A one week waiver of fees will be given to those that provide at least one week's notice of a student missing a week of PALS. Each student in the program will be given one week to use through the school year in case of vacation, sickness, etc. This one week must be used within 5 consecutive days. The days may not be dispersed throughout the school year. If a student does not attend full time (5 days a week) the same procedure applies to those that attend less than 5 days a week.

The One Week Grace flat fee will be applied as follows:

5 day AM: \$36. 3 day AM: \$25

5 day PM: \$71 3 day PM: \$43

Enrollment Deposit

A first month's payment is charged at time of registration for each participant. This payment covers the first month of PALS. If PALS registration is cancelled before October 1, 2019, a \$100 service charge will be kept.

Attendance Procedures

Check-In Procedures

Near the end of the school day the Site Supervisor will check the school's absence and pick up list. When a child who is scheduled to attend PAL does not arrive and the program has not received an absence call from the child's parents and/or the school, the Site Supervisor will institute an immediate search.

An unaccounted absence will initiate the following actions:

- The child's school will be contacted to see if the child was absent or dismissed from school.
- Each parent's cell phone will be called. Messages will be left if no one is available.
- The child's home will be called. A message will be left if no one is home.
- The child's parents will be called at work. Messages will be left if no one is available.
- If a child's parents cannot be contacted, someone on the child's emergency contact list and/or the Vernon Hills Police Department will be sent to the child's home.

Programming

Child to Staff Ratio

The ratio of children to staff is 20:1 or lower, providing the individual attention a child may need.

Staffing

PALS Instructors are all caring professionals who are committed to the development of children. All PALS Instructors are CPR & First Aid certified. Staff is also encouraged to continue their independent educational development.

All staff members at the Vernon Hills Park District are Mandated Reporters. If staff members suspect possible abuse (physical, sexual or emotional), the staff must notify the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). All procedures by DCFS will be followed.

Homework Policy

PALS stresses the importance of homework and sets time aside every day for the children to complete their assignments. PALS Instructors are not tutors! PALS Instructors are available to supervise the homework area and to assist the children with their homework. However, a child who needs individual help with his or her homework must ask. Due to the number of children who require assistance during homework time, PALS Instructors are unable to check each child's homework for accuracy or provide the type of one-on-one homework help that is available from a private tutor.

Although we encourage the children to do their homework when it is assigned, using the time set aside to complete homework is the responsibility of the child. Please let us know if you prefer to have a child complete his or her homework at PALS.

Snack

All children will be offered a snack, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We offer all nut-free snacks in the program. Although we are mindful to allergies and other dietary restrictions and try to provide snacks accordingly, if your child prefers different or

additional food, please feel free to send a snack to school with your child. Children are free to get water from the drinking fountains as they please.

Outdoor Play

Playing outside is very important to the health and physical development of children. Therefore, it is very important that your child is always dressed appropriately for the weather. This may include: snow boots, mittens or gloves, hat and snow pants/suit. The children will be outside. In the winter months, children will not go outside when the temperature is 20 degrees or below with the wind-chill factor. If your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities, then a written note from your physician must be provided.

Personal Belongings

Children are discouraged from bringing personal items to the program such as toys, video games, and cell phones. The Vernon Hills Park District takes no responsibility for any lost or stolen items.

In accordance with school rules, we do not allow the use of electronics such as cell phones, video games, cameras, laptops, etc.) at any time during our PALS programs. Should you need to get in touch with your child, please contact the Site Supervisor by phone, text or email.

Chromebooks, supplied by the schools, may be used for homework only.

Communication

Keeping parents informed is an important aspect of PALS. We feel that the exchange of information between parents and staff provides insight for both. Knowing what your child is doing during the day helps you reinforce and encourage the same topics and activities at home. Our staff can better provide for a child's needs if they are aware of situations at home. It is vital that you inform us of any changes happenings in your family.

PALS Site Supervisors will post a monthly newsletter/calendar on our website.

Please visit www.vhparkdistrict.org and go to 'PALS Afterschool Program', listed under the 'Programs' tab.

In addition, information will be posted by the 'Sign In/ Out area' at each PALS location.

Parent Involvement

Involvement of parents in our programs is essential. Your cooperation with all policies and procedures is extremely important to us.

Take every opportunity to talk with the PALS Site Supervisor and/or instructor about your child. Ask your child about their time spent in our program each day.

You can also volunteer to help with your special talents! Parents and Instructors together can help your child develop to his or her full potential.

Adjusting

Each child will react differently to new situations. Sometimes a child does wonderfully on their first day because everything is new and exciting, but may become anxious the second day when he or she realizes that this is going to be a new routine. Most children need two or three weeks to adjust fully to a new environment. The best support a parent can give is to be enthusiastic, encouraging and patient. If you need suggestions for helping your child to feel comfortable, talk with an Instructor or Site Supervisor.

They are there to help support you and your child.

Health Policy

Illness

We ask your cooperation in maintaining the level of “wellness” in our program. Parents can assist in keeping our facility healthy by making sure that their children are in good health before coming to the program and feeling fit before returning after an illness. Children with fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, congestion, persistent cough or sore throat with fever etc. should be home until they are well. If your child has signs of illness, please keep them home. If your child has a contagious disease, PLEASE report this to us immediately. Please review the guidelines below:

Your child will be placed in isolation and sent home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

1. A temperature of 101 degrees and higher
2. Diarrhea and/or vomiting
3. Undiagnosed rash
4. Nasal discharge or discharge from the eyes or ears
5. Lethargic or lack of well being due to illness

If your child has a contagious disease, PLEASE report this to us immediately.

Examples:

1. Strep throat, Scarlet fever
2. Pin Worm, Ring Worm
3. Head Lice, Scabies
4. Measles, Mumps, Chicken pox
5. Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
6. Impetigo

Before returning to the program, your child should be:

1. Feeling well and fit for a complete 24 hours.
2. Free of temperature for 24 hours. This means 24 hours of a temperature of 99 degrees or below WITHOUT medication.
3. Free of vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
4. Must be on any antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
5. On a prescription eye drop for 24 hours after pink eye.
6. Home from the program a minimum of seven days from the last crop of chicken pox.

PALS can require a Physician's note for your child to return to the program if they suspect that your child is ill. Any time your child visits the physician due to illness or accident, please obtain and submit a physician's note for them to return to the program with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Medication for your child

Please contact the PALS Site Supervisor to fill out our Medication Dispensing Information Form and Permission to Dispense Medication Form. No medication will be given to a child in our program without these forms.

Please note: PALS does not have access to the school's nurse's office for any medications and/or epi pens that are kept at the school.

Regulations for medication

1. Medicine must bear a current prescription label with child's name, date, directions for administering, physician's name, prescription number, and name of drug store or pharmacy.
2. Over the counter, non-prescription medication may only be administered when accompanied by a signed physician's note on letterhead and a completed Medication Authorization Form.

Note: Failure to comply with the regulations above will result in medication **NOT** being administered. In such case, parent will be notified to come to the program to administer the medicine.

Special Medical Conditions

For the safety of the children and the staff, any medical condition that requires blood testing and or administration of medication by injection, must be treated in a private area not located in the classroom or in the presence of any children. This does not apply to the administration of medication in emergency situations (e.g. epi pen for severe allergic reactions.)

Allergies

We request the cooperation of our parents to partner with us in promoting a safe environment for children with food allergies. Our PALS Site Supervisors and instructors will attempt to accommodate each program participant who has such an allergy and has identified the following operational practices for everyone to follow:

- Parents with children who have a food allergy should identify the child's specific allergy in their registration packet and on their PALS Data Form and notify PALS as soon as possible concerning the details of the allergy.
- Once a severe or life-threatening allergy is identified, the parents or treating physician of the allergic child must complete a Food Allergy Action Plan for review and comment by the Site Supervisor.
- If a child with severe or life-threatening food allergies enrolls into our program, we will ask all families to cooperate by refraining from bringing any food that contains any ingredients identified in the Food Allergy Action Plan. We recognize that this may be an inconvenience for children's food choices, but the few extra minutes you spend could save a child's life.
- PALS will do their best to monitor foods that may pose a potential harm to the allergic child. However, since many items may be without their original packaging (or since trace amounts of an allergen may not even be disclosed on a list of ingredients), it is impossible to inspect every food item from every child to ensure compliance.
- Parents should promptly notify the PALS Site Supervisor of any change in their child's allergic condition.

Please note: PALS does NOT have access to the school's nurse's office for any medications and/or epi pens that are kept at the school.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, every effort will be made to notify the parents immediately. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the PALS Data Form.

911 may be called for medical emergencies before we contact parents due to the nature of the injury or illness. The parent or guardian of the child is responsible for any costs associated with the emergency. All emergency procedures and first aid will be followed regardless of religion.

PALS will administer first aid to a child on a limited basis for minor accidents. On the PALS Data Form, you will be asked to sign permission for PALS Site Supervisors and instructors to administer first aid regardless of religion. All PALS Site Supervisors and instructors are trained in First aid and CPR.

An accident report for injuries will be completed by PALS.

Discipline and Behavior

We use large amounts of positive reinforcement and redirection and encourage problem solving through discussion in a group setting or individually. Our goal is to encourage self-discipline within each child. After several attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, if the child still demonstrates an inability to benefit from the program or whose presence is detrimental to the group, the child shall be discharged from the program. The goal will be to meet the needs of the child. In the event that a child's behavior progresses to the point that he or she poses a threat to himself or others, parents will be contacted and will need to pick up their child. If a child and or a parent are at risk of harming themselves or others, or fail to follow the rules and regulations of the program, the child will be withdrawn from the program. Courtesy towards the PALS Site Supervisors, instructors, parents and children is expected at all times from the child and parent. Corporal punishment and or verbal abuse of any kind are not permissible.

Dismissal

Dismissal from the program occurs if a child is not ready for the group experience. The program supervisor will give the parent advance notice of dismissal. Other reasons for dismissal include: unpaid tuition and fees, consistent late pick up time, failure to comply with other program policies including the behavior policy.

Code of Conduct

All PALS Instructors are required to follow a Code of Conduct. Parents must also adhere to these procedures while participating in a Park District program.

Parents should not abuse children or PALS Site Supervisors and instructors, including:

- physical abuse—strike, spank, shake, slap;
- verbal abuse—use of profanity, humiliate, degrade, threaten;
- sexual abuse—inappropriate touch or verbal exchange;
- mental abuse—shaming, cruelty.

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.

Parents will respond to staff with respect and consideration and treat everyone equal regardless of sex, race, religion or culture.

The police will be called for anyone attempting to pick up a child while possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Smoking or using tobacco in the presence of the children enrolled is not permitted.

Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of the children is prohibited. Parents will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, tact and maturity while on park District property.

Parents may not ask employees to baby-sit or transport children in their vehicles.

Policy and Procedure Handbook

Please be advised that you are responsible for all the information in this handbook and will be required to sign a form that you have read and understand these guidelines that have been set forth.

The Vernon Hills Park District reserves the right to change existing policies or introduce new policies pertaining to program operations at any time with two weeks prior notice to families.