



**Camp Fire USA™**

**New Mexico Council**

# **KIDS CARE**

## **Policies and Guidelines**

### **For**

### **Parents**

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**1613 University Blvd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102**

**842-8787**

**www.campfireabq.org**

**Camp Fire USA New Mexico Council**

**Policies and Guidelines for Parents**

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Camp Fire USA

**builds caring, confident youth and future leaders**

**Camp Fire USA New Mexico Council**

## **Policies and Guidelines for Parents**

### **Welcome to the Camp Fire USA Family!**

Camp Fire USA New Mexico Council is a local, private nonprofit organization committed to providing quality programs for children and youth. Camp Fire is inclusive, open to every person in the communities we serve, welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or other aspects of diversity.

**Our mission is to build caring, confident youth and future leaders.**

Camp Fire USA adheres to Twelve Core Values that guide the development of programs and the organization as a whole:

- We believe that children and youth are our most precious resources.
- We believe in an approach to youth development that builds assets and empowers individuals.
- We believe that the best youth development occurs in small groups where children and youth are actively involved in creating their own learning.
- We are committed to coeducation, providing opportunities for boys, girls and families to develop together.
- We provide caring, trained mentors to work with children and youth.
- We are inclusive welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, or other aspect of diversity.
- We respect and celebrate nature.
- We foster leadership, engaging children and youth to give service and make decisions in a democratic society.
- We provide safe, fun and nurturing environments for children and youth.
- We enrich parents' and other adults' lives by expanding their skills and encouraging them to share their talents and build relationships with children and youth.
- We respond to community needs with our programs and expertise.



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- We advocate on behalf of children, youth and families.

This mission and the adherence to our core values can only be accomplished through the skill and dedication of caring and consistent adult staff. Therefore we strive to provide our employees with a salary, benefit and training package which encourages longevity, promotes a sense of belonging and provides recognition for a job well done. By employing only **THE BEST**, Camp Fire USA is able to provide quality programs for youth.

Our organization is affiliated with the national Camp Fire USA organization, founded in 1910 with the purpose of involving girls of all races and religions in a variety of outdoor activities and opportunities. Since 1975, Camp Fire USA has included boys and girls together in programs that build knowledge and skills, self-esteem and self-reliance, responsible and respectful attitudes, communication and social skills, and concern for others, our community, and our environment.

As a project of Camp Fire USA New Mexico Council, KIDS CARE offers high-quality school aged programs to families throughout the greater Albuquerque metro areas. Our programs offer children not only safe and secure care, but also a full curriculum of activities designed to enrich, entertain, and educate them.

## What is a Quality Program?

KIDS CARE is designed to be a high-quality before and after school program, based on the following guidelines:

- **Human Relationships** between and among children and staff that foster mutual respect and attention to group and individual needs
- **Indoor and Outdoor Environments** that are clean, safe, and stimulating, and that offer a variety of interest centers and mini-environments for individual choice
- **Activities** that offer options for entertainment and relaxation. Participation in recreation activities leads to well-balanced, healthy and physically active children, develops social skills, builds positive self esteem, develops life and leadership skills and stimulates children's minds and creative thinking through play.
- **Safety, Health and Nutrition** practices that ensure children's healthy development
- **Administration** that promotes equity and staff excellence

Camp Fire programs offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum of informal education which offers opportunities for elementary age children to realize their potential and function as caring, self-directed individuals responsible to themselves and others.

Our staff are carefully selected by conducting extensive interviews, reference checking and thorough background checks. They receive extensive pre-service training and participate in on-going training throughout the school term.

Camp Fire's policies and guidelines are designed to promote program quality and ensure children's safety. Please call our office at 842-8787 if you have questions about any of our policies.

**Quality programs start with quality staff.**

## **Camp Fire USA Program Goals**

**Objective:** To reinforce and compliment the skills learned during the school day

1. Provide better social interaction with both peers and adults
2. Provide formal and informal opportunities to implement reading skills
3. Encourage problem solving
4. Investigate science through inquiry
5. Provide opportunities for physical activity both in groups and individually a minimum of 20% of program time
6. Provide opportunities for children to gather and share information
7. Provide health and nutrition information in both formal and informal ways
8. Encourage homework completion

## **Policies and Guidelines**

### **Signing Children In and Out**

Parents or their authorized agents are required to sign their children in and out of Camp Fire programs. Any requests for exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Youth Services Manager or the Executive Director. Signed releases of liability are required for attendance at other extracurricular activities, counseling or therapy occurring during Camp Fire program hours.

In order to safeguard your child, we ask that all families have a code word that is used for identification purposes. You may be asked to provide your code word when requesting account information by phone or calling in absences. Any individual not recognized by our staff will be asked to show **picture identification** when picking up a child from our program.

### **Reporting Children's Absences**

For the safety of your children and to avoid unnecessary staff worry, parents must call the Camp Fire absence line (842-8787 option #5) or speak to the Site Manager at their child's program to report **daily** absences.

Partial billing credit is available for **weekly** (Monday-Friday) absences only and must be arranged in advance with our Accounting Department (842-8787, option 2 (no charge if we are notified by the previous Friday, or one-half the regular charge if not).

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

All Camp Fire programs close promptly at 6:00 pm. **All children must be picked up before 6:00 pm.** Parents arriving after 6:00 pm will be assessed a **late fee of \$10.00** for every 15 minutes after 6:00 pm or any portion thereof, per child. The police will be contacted for children left at Camp Fire after 7:00 pm. Parents who do not pick up their children by 7:00 pm will be suspended from the Camp Fire program. Parents who are repeatedly late will be asked to find alternative care.

## **Snow Days**

### **Delayed Schedules**

Weather conditions occasionally require that school districts modify school schedules. Because Camp Fire programs occupy school facilities, we too may have to alter our program schedules. Poor weather conditions can result in **abbreviated days**, with school starting two hours late. On these days, Camp Fire programs **begin at 8:00 am** and continue until school starts. In the event the school district cancels school entirely after children have been left at Camp Fire, parents will be contacted to pick up their children within one hour of notification.

### **Cancellations**

Inclement weather may prevent schools from opening at all. Under these circumstances, there will be **no Camp Fire programs** at school sites.

## **Sick or Injured Children**

Children who are sick should be kept at home. Site Managers will notify parents when children are too sick to remain in the program. Parents will be expected to pick up their child within an hour of being notified of the child's condition.

In the event a child is injured at a Camp Fire program, every effort will be made to contact parents or their authorized representatives to advise them of the situation or to seek guidance in securing medical care, if necessary. **Please keep Camp Fire advised of any changes to your phone numbers so we can contact you in the event of an emergency.**

## **Medication**

Camp Fire staff cannot administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child during program hours.

## **Child Abuse or Neglect**

In accordance with New Mexico state law, Camp Fire will report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a disaster or emergency, the children will be evacuated to the location designated in the Emergency Evacuation Plan. Parents will be notified by phone to pick up their child at the designated location if it is necessary to evacuate the school building. The evacuation plan will be posted on the parent communication board and a copy of the Emergency Evacuation Plan provided to the parent/guardian.

## **Behavior Guidelines**

Camp Fire staff provide clear guidelines and limits for children's behavior. Staff use positive techniques, discussion, reinforcement, encouragement, redirection and clear, consistent rules to create a safe, productive environment where children can play, learn and grow. Staff encourage children to work together to resolve conflicts.

In some situations brief, supervised separations from the group or other logical consequences may be appropriate. Physical punishment is not permitted as a method of discipline at Camp Fire USA programs under any circumstances.

Behavior which threatens the safety of the child, other children or staff will not be tolerated. If a child behaves in an aggressive manner, parents may be called to pick up their child within the hour. Behavior which causes damage to the facility or equipment will not be tolerated. Parents will be held financially liable for a child's deliberate destruction of equipment or damage to the facility.

In an effort to resolve serious behavioral issues, parents may be called at any time. With parent's permission, a child's teacher, counselor or therapist may be contacted for input and guidance. When speaking with a parent, problem behavior will be discussed in an effort to brainstorm possible solutions. A plan outlining the child's expected behavior as well as the staff and parent responsibilities will be discussed. Should aggressive behavior continue, the child may be suspended for one to three days. Should another incident of aggressive behavior occur the child will be suspended from the program and parents will be called to determine whether the program's group environment is in the best interest of the child. If the child's behavior continues, parents may be asked to seek alternative care.

We encourage frequent staff and parent communication to address behavior issues or other concerns. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to our attention.

## **Weapons Policy**

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for your children, Camp Fire USA has established a weapons policy. For purposes of this policy, a “weapon” is:

- Any firearm
- Any explosive
- Any other object that has a potential for violent use, even if manufactured for a nonviolent purpose
- Any “look-alike” object or toy that resembles an object that has a potential for violent use, if the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use as a weapon.

Camp Fire follows the weapons policies and procedures established by the school district in which our programs operate. Our staff respond to situations involving weapons in a manner that protects children and staff, immediately removing the weapon from the child or environment, and informing the child’s parent. A parent conference is required following any violation of the weapons policy. Depending on circumstances, other action may include discipline, consequences or expulsion from the program.

We seek your help and cooperation to ensure that your children do not have, in their personal possession or backpack, any item that could be classified as a weapon. Together we can maintain a safe and healthy environment for all Camp Fire USA children.

## **Children’s Special Needs**

Camp Fire USA makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation for children’s disabilities, unless doing so creates an undue hardship or poses a threat to the health or safety of other children or staff.

## **Walking Field Trips**

At the time of registration for Camp Fire programs, parents sign a General Permission Slip authorizing walking field trips within the vicinity of the school site. Information regarding times and dates of these excursions are posted at the school sites.

### **Snack**

KIDS CARE provides an afternoon snack each day and a morning and afternoon snack during full day programs. Parents should note any allergies on the registration paperwork and contact the Camp Fire USA office at 842-8787, Option #6 with any questions regarding food allergies.

### **Celebrations**

There are many events that may be celebrated in Camp Fire USA programs including holidays and birthdays. Please contact us at 842-8787, Option #6 regarding policies for parties and celebrations at your child's program.

### **Dress Code**

KIDS CARE programs will follow the dress code of the school.

### **Personal Belongings**

Camp Fire USA is **not** responsible for the loss or damage of personal belongings. Parents are discouraged from allowing their children to bring personal toys, electronics or music to the Camp Fire program. Our programs provide developmentally appropriate activities and equipment for all age groups as well as the opportunity for individual free play to keep children safe and happy.

Camp Fire USA follows Albuquerque Public School's policy regarding children's use of personal cell phones. Cell phones should be turned off and stored in the bottom of the child's backpack. If children need to contact their parents by phone, the Site Manager will initiate the contact using the program phone.

### **Parental Code of Conduct**

Parents and staff are considered role models for the children and must act accordingly. Failure to do so may result in the loss of services. Parents must refrain from:

- Verbal abuse of children or staff including yelling and use of vulgar or inappropriate language.
- Arguing with staff or other parents.

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- Discipline of other people's children.
- Threats to staff, children or other parents.

### **School Breaks**

Camp Fire USA may offer care during school breaks. Information will be available 3 weeks before the break and emailed to parents or provided on site.

## **Payment Options**

### **How and When to Pay**

Payments for program services *must be made in advance* and are *not accepted at the school sites*. Payments may be made by any of the following means:

- **Online at [www.campfireabq.org](http://www.campfireabq.org)**
- **By telephone at 842-8787, Option #2**, weekdays between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, using MasterCard or Visa cards
- **Through auto debits** from your bank account. Contact us at 842-8787, Option #2 for more information.
- **At the Camp Fire USA office** (1613 University NE) by personal check, money order, MasterCard or Visa. The office is open week days from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. **Please include your account number on checks and money orders.**

Payments may be made on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis, **but must be received at the Camp Fire USA office by the Friday before services are provided.** We do not send statements unless accounts are past due and subject to a **\$20 late fee. Late fees are assessed to all accounts with a past due balance of \$10.00 or more on the date statements are mailed.**

Rates for extended care services may differ from regular rates. Payment for extended care programs must also be made in advance at the time of registration.

### **Past Due Accounts**

We depend on your timely payments in order to pay our staff and maintain program quality. Therefore, if payments are not made in a timely manner, we will be forced to:

- Cancel services for your child (the staff will not accept your child into the program) until the required payment is collected. In addition, you may be required to have your payments automatically debited from your bank account for the remainder of the school year in order for your child to return to the program.
- Turn your cancelled account over to a collection agency if Camp Fire's efforts to collect past due accounts fail.

**If your check or auto debit is returned for any reason**, we will charge an additional **\$35 fee**. If more than one check or auto debit is returned, you will be required to pay

with a cashier's check or money order for the remainder of the school year.

### **Refunds or Credits**

We **do not offer refunds or credits** in the following circumstances:

- For days when Camp Fire USA programs do not operate (*see page 10*).
- For absences from the program for less than one week, unless the child is on a daily contract. (*see page 5 for reporting absences*)

We **do offer partial credits** in the following circumstances:

- For absences of one week or more (there will be no charge if we are notified by the previous Friday or one-half the regular weekly charge if not notified by the previous Friday).
- For cancellation of the contract **prior** to using Camp Fire services, the registration fee and one-half of the first week's service fee are not refundable.

All questions about fees and client accounts should be directed to the Camp Fire Accounting Department at 842-8787, Option 2 or e-mail us at [Finance@campfireabq.org](mailto:Finance@campfireabq.org).

## **The Role of Parents in Camp Fire Programs**

Parents are *always welcome* at Camp Fire programs. At Camp Fire USA, we recognize that parents are their children's first and most committed teachers and advocates, and that children benefit the most when the adults in their lives—parents, teachers and child care providers—work together.

Here are some ways to help your child succeed in Camp Fire:

- When you come in to drop your children off or pick them up at Camp Fire, talk with the staff, even if it's only for a few seconds. Check the parent table for flyers, calendars and notices.
- Talk with your children every day about what they did in Camp Fire. Look for books, TV programs, and places to visit that follow up on Camp Fire activities and share them with your children.
- Work with the staff to address any behavior or health issues or concerns that you or they may have about your children.
- If you have a little free time, drop in for a visit. Observe the activities or participate in them with your child.
- Volunteer to assist the Camp Fire staff on a regular or an occasional basis.
- Communicate regularly with the staff to share ideas, questions or concerns.

**Today's Kids, Tomorrow's Leaders  
Together we can make it happen!**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How can I make changes or cancel my contract?**

Please contact the Camp Fire USA Accounting Department by phone at 842-8787, Option #2 by the Friday before the effective date. You will be given a confirmation number to verify the change or cancellation.

### **How can I make changes to my emergency contacts?**

In order to make changes to your emergency contacts please call the Camp Fire USA Programming Department by phone at 842-8787, Option #6. Only the enrolling parent/guardian may make changes to the account.

### **Will I receive a statement each month?**

You will not receive a statement unless your account is in arrears and subject to a **\$20 late fee**. However, upon request we will provide a statement for record keeping purposes.

### **Why do I have to pay for services in advance?**

Camp Fire USA is a nonprofit organization. Payment in advance allows us to maintain the necessary cash flow to pay our staff and purchase program equipment and supplies. Payments are due before 5:00 pm on the Friday before services are provided.

### **Can I make payments at my child's KIDS CARE site?**

The care of your child is our first priority. Our staff are involved in the care of your children and cannot accept payments. You must make all payments at our office, by mail, by credit card over the telephone or online at [www.campfireabq.org](http://www.campfireabq.org). Auto-debit from your bank account is also available for your convenience.

### **Does KIDS CARE offer programs at my school when school is not in session?**

KIDS CARE is a before and after school program. Full day programs (7:00 am to 6:00 pm) may be offered at a limited number of sites during some school breaks. Please call us at 842-8787, Option #6, if you have questions regarding extended care.