

PARENT HANDBOOK

COOL AID SOCIETY

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Vision Statement

Helping youth reach new horizons.

Mission Statement

Drop-in centres offering friendship, guidance and support to youth, in grades 1 to 12, in Grande Prairie.

Belief Statement

- There is a need for youth to have opportunities to participate in healthy and active leisure activities that are positive alternatives to risky behaviours.
- There is a need for youth to have a location, relatively independent of other structured influences, where their own decisions primarily affect outcomes.
- There is a need for youth to have information about a variety of social issues and appropriate referrals to agencies and services, when appropriate.

Program Goals

- To provide a variety of activities to youth in grades 1 to 12.
- To provide an opportunity for youth to build protective factors and increase their resiliency.
- To encourage better relationships between youth, parents and the community.
- To act as a liaison between youth, and exiting services and agencies.
- To provide education about youth related problems and issues.

Code of Conduct

Cool Aid Society has adopted the following statements as our code of conduct:

- Treat people with respect, compassion, dignity and fairness.
- Be open, honest and loyal.
- Act ethically and uphold professional standards.
- Take responsibility for our own actions and expect the same of others.
- Respect confidentiality and privacy.

The programs provide a variety of activities that encourage youth to participate in so that they can follow their own natural sense of curiosity and discovery. Monthly calendars are provided to all youth and are posted at the Centres.

Our children, tween and teen drop-in programs make a difference:

- Our programs keep young people safe and out of trouble.
- Participants develop interests and skills that stay with them throughout their lives through such as greater engagement in learning, and higher academic performance.
- Working parents who know their children are in a safe secure place supervised by adults during out-of-school time and evenings are able to be more productive, work more hours and move into better jobs.
- Lower juvenile crime rates mean lower police protection and security costs.
- Positive youth development evolved from prevention programs of the 1980s whose approach was built on the premise that young people will build their assets and become engaged in their communities.

Our program planning is based on a prevention philosophy. Cool Aid Society promotes a healthy and active lifestyle as an alternative to risky behaviour. The services that we provide are supported by Alberta Health Services values and beliefs with regards to prevention. Best Practices in Prevention (AADAC, 2002) states that prevention efforts must focus on people rather than on substances; value the meaningful participation of target groups; and embrace a community-based, collaborative approach that encourages grassroots ownership. Based on this philosophy the staff work hard at preparing appropriate activities for the youth in order to meet their needs and interests while respecting their limitations. Please keep in mind that what has been planned in advance can often change based on what the youths' interests are. We are flexible in meeting all youths' needs.

Hours of Operation *and Program Closures*

- Children's programs:
 - Children in grades 1 to 6
 - Monday to Friday
 - During the months of September to June, programs will run from afterschool to 6 pm
 - On full days off, the Centres will be open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm
 - During the months of July and August, the Centres will be open from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm
- Tweens' drop-in:
 - 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
 - Check with the Centres for the days and the grade levels
- Teens' drop-in:
 - 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm
 - Check with the Centres for the days and grade levels

Both Centres will be closed on statutory holidays and will be identified in the monthly calendars.

In the event of severe weather, power failure or other unforeseen events our Centres may be unable to open or may be required to close early. When possible, parents will be notified of a potential closure or an announcement will be made on the radio.

Registration

All registration forms must be completed and returned before your child's first day participation in our programs. Please report any changes in address, phone number(s) and emergency contacts immediately. It is important that you keep us informed of any changes in case we have to get in contact with you.

Child Guidance Policy

Each youth will be valued and treated with respect and compassion. Appreciation for individual stages of development and cultural differences will be considered at all times. The following principles will guide the staff in disciplining the youth:

- Any discipline action must be reasonable to the situation and circumstances;
- Staff may, under no circumstances, inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation;
- Staff may not deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity;
- Staff may not use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation;
- A staff member who encounters a particularly difficult youth will seek the assistance of fellow staff members;

- In all dealings with youth, staff should strive to respond, as opposed to react, to the youth; and
- Any disciplinary action should be communicated to the parent(s) or guardian.

Use of developmentally appropriate and clear language will be used to encourage positive behaviours and setting limits. When limits are tested the following steps will be used as a guideline for encouraging appropriate behaviours:

- Stating expectations in a clear and positive manner;
- Discussing the situation;
- Problem solving;
- Redirection; and
- Expression of feelings will be encouraged.

Every youth's behaviour will be considered individually, with fairness and flexibility, so that the best opportunities are presented to correct the behaviour in question. Any behaviour that has potential to cause harm to other youth or the youth themselves must be handled immediately. The youth will be counseled, in a developmentally-appropriate manner, about more acceptable ways of behaving, and given an opportunity to examine their own behaviour. Parents/guardians may be called to share a concern and to help develop and implement a home/program strategy to deal with the youth's difficult behaviour. In consultation with the parents/guardian, staff of Cool Aid Society may determine that a youth may not attend the program for a period of time. In the case of serious or continual occurrences the youth may be asked not to return to the program.

Termination

Cool Aid Society reserves the right to terminate the participation of a youth for the following reasons:

- Abuse of the guidelines outlined in the Parent's Handbook;
- Unsuitability of the program to meet the youth's needs;
- Extreme behaviours that are unsafe or dangerous towards other youths and/or staff; and
- Verbal abuse or bullying towards youth /staff.

Drop off and Pick Up

Sometimes when you arrive to drop off or pick up your child we may be at the park. If we are not at the Centre there will be a sign on the door saying where the group can be found. If we are on a field trip, our location, arrival and departure times will be on the monthly calendar and there will be a sign on the door. **Your child will need to be picked up no later than 6:00 pm (children's program), 9:00 pm (tweens' program) and 10:00 pm (teens' program).** Youth cannot leave the Centres, whether they are accompanied or not, without notifying the staff.

Late Pick Up

Children must be picked up by the closing time. If your child has not been picked up by closing time the following procedure will be followed:

1. Parent(s) will be telephoned at home, work or cell. In the event that the parent(s) cannot be located, the emergency contacts named on the registration form will be telephoned and asked to pick up the child.
2. If neither the parent(s) nor the emergency contacts can be reached, Northwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority or the RCMP will be telephoned and asked to take custody of the child.

Clothing

Youth will have the opportunity to go outdoors to play even if only for a very brief time; the exception will be if it is raining heavily or extremely cold weather. It should also be remembered that the youth will have gone outside at school and their clothes may be too wet to go outside, so please ensure that your child has appropriate and extra seasonal clothing.

Medication

It is strongly recommended that children not bring medication, prescribed or non-prescribed, to the Centre. If a youth requires medication to be administered while at the Centre, parents should discuss this with the staff. Medication must come in their original packaging/container and include the youth's name and dosage.

Accident/Illness

If your child is seriously injured we will contact you immediately; this includes possible broken bones, bleeding lasting more than 10 minutes, injuries requiring stitches or injuries to the head or back. If a serious injury/illness occurs an ambulance will be called and the parent will be responsible for the cost of the ambulance.

If the child becomes ill at the Centre, parents will be contacted and asked to come and pick up the child or make arrangements for another family member or other person to come and pick up the child. Until the parent is able to do so, the child will be placed in a quiet corner of the Centre.

Communicable Disease

It is expected that the parent(s) will inform the staff if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. This will enable other youth to be protected by ensuring the disease is quickly contained and controlled. Examples of communicable diseases are chicken pox, mumps, measles and so on. A list of communicable diseases is available by calling the Health Link at 1.800.408.5465.

Fire Drill Procedure

Fire drills are scheduled periodically. When the alarm is sounded staff will quickly evacuate all youth safely and move them to a designated meeting place. In the case of a real fire parents will be contacted and informed of the situation as soon as possible.

Toys, Electronics and Cell Phones from Home

Our programs discourage youth from bringing toys, electronics and cell phones from home as they could get broken or stolen. If toys, electronics and cell phones are brought to the program children will be asked to put them in their backpacks.

Snacks & Lunches

We will not provide snacks or lunches. Parents should provide snacks and lunches that meet the Health Canada Food Guide. Our Centre is a NUT FREE zone.

Special Days

If you would like to bring a treat for a special occasion please check with a staff member first to ensure that all children would be able to enjoy the treat.

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Cool Aid Society works to maintain a positive, nurturing environment at all times. In effort to achieve this, the following guidelines have been drafted to express the conduct expected from parents. Parents are expected to follow a code of conduct when dealing with children, staff and other parents. This code of conduct includes but is not restricted to:

- Treating others with respect;
- Being fair, honest and truthful;
- Using tone, words or gestures that are respectful and inviting;
- Finding a cooperative solution to identified problems;
- Discuss concerns away from the children;
- Informing the staff about changes in the child's life; and
- Following the illness guidelines.

Behaviours that are inappropriate include:

- Shouting;
- Swearing; and
- Talking in a negative, degrading manner about or to any child, family or staff member.

The consequence of not abiding by the code of conduct will be that the family will be asked to not return to the program. We will strive to minimize the negative impact of the consequence on the affected child and eviction would be used in only the most extreme situations.

Parent Concerns

If you have a concern at one our programs we suggest that you follow the steps outlined below. We hope this will help you to communicate your concern and will give the staff an opportunity to work with you to ensure that solutions are found.

1. Talk with a staff member. Take a few minutes when you drop off or pick up your child.
2. Contact the executive director, Helen Ficocelli, at 780.978.3565 or Director@CoolAidSociety.com

Smoking

Cool Aid Society is a SMOKE FREE environment both indoors and outdoors. This applies to staff and parents.

Registered Charity

The Cool Aid Society of Grande Prairie (Cool Aid Society) is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act of Canada Revenue Agency (www.cra.gc.ca). This means that we can provide tax receipts for donations to our Centres.

Resource Contacts

A parent bulletin board is located in the entryway of the Centres and a parent section on our website (www.CoolAidSociety.com) with information for parents. There are also a variety of communications handed out regularly. It is recommended that parents read these items as it has important information that pertains to our programs and your child.

Contact Information

Hillside Centre

9667 Hillcrest Drive
Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 1A9
Phone: **780.532.9004**
Fax: 780.532.8575
Email: Hillside@CoolaidSociety.com
Website: www.CoolAidSociety.com

South Side Centre

9645 Prairie Road
Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 6V5
Phone: **780.357.9354**
Fax: 780.357.8845
Email: SouthSide@CoolAidSociety.com
Website: www.CoolAidSociety.com

Administration

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Cell: **780.978.3565**
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