Town of Vernon

Parks & Recreation Department

R.E.K. After School
Parent Handbook

Vernon Parks and Recreation Department

R.E.K.

After School & Vacation Camp

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Welcome to Vernon Parks and Recreation Department school year programs.

Thank you for choosing our programs for your family!

Program Goals

1. **Safety**

   Our program strives to provide a safe, healthy atmosphere for the peace of mind of families and the well-being of program participants and staff.

2. **Education**

   Our program will prioritize education and support the goals of the schools. Homework time will be offered each day after school with assistance from staff members available when possible. Participants will be held to behavioral standards that align with the schools' and will respect the school facilities that are used for the program.

3. **Fun**

   After spending so much of their time in school, children need to relax and unwind. Staff will strive to maintain a fun environment and provide a variety of activities.

4. **Respect**

   All participants and staff will treat others in a respectful manner. Staff will set a good example and maintain high standards for behavior, study habits, and good character.

5. **Physical Fitness & Outdoor Time**

   Our program will prioritize physical recreation activities and outdoor time. We stress the importance and benefits of physical fitness through structured activities such as team sports and group games, as well as free play outdoors.

Please take the time to read through this handbook. We hope that you understand and appreciate our policies, as they directly relate to the safety and well-being of program participants. We look forward to your cooperation in helping us provide a pleasant and safe experience for all families and staff in our programs. If you have any questions, please contact the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department or ask an on-site staff member for assistance.

The programs operated by the Town of Vernon Parks & Recreation Department are not licensed by the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC). Municipal programs are not required to be licensed as per Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-77.

Contact Information

All communications regarding these programs should be directed through the Vernon Parks & Recreation Department, NOT the elementary schools.

R.E.K.
Center Road School
20 Center Road
Cell: (860) 308-0943

Vacation Camp
375 Hartford Turnpike
Cell: TBD

Vernon Parks and Recreation Office
120 South Street
Vernon, Connecticut 06066

Monday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Friday: Closed
(Closed weekends and holidays)

Telephone: 860-870-3520
Fax: 860-870-3525
E-mail: parksandrec@vernon-ct.gov
www.vernonrec.org

Registration & Scheduling

R.E.K

To Register:

1. Complete registration process online at www.vernonrec.org

All R.E.K. registrations must be completed a minimum of five business days before the start of the program. Late registrations will result in a deferred start date.

2. Full payment is due at the time of registration. Please refer to the section on Payment & Fees for details.

3. Notify the **school office** that your child will be attending the program.

Scheduling:

When registering, you have the option to commit to a regular monthly schedule of attendance at a discounted daily rate, or you may select the individual days of the week your child will attend at our daily drop-in rate.

All dates your child will be attending the R.E.K. program must be scheduled in advance. To discuss any other scheduling options, please contact the Vernon Parks & Recreation Office for more information.

Any requests for schedule changes must be submitted IN WRITING. Please refer to the section on Payment & Fees for more details

Withdrawal

To withdraw your child from the program, please provide two weeks' written notice. Refund information is available on the parks and recreation website.www.vernonrec.org

Vacation Camp

To Register:

You must register for each session of Vacation Camp separately. Registrations may be done online at www.vernonrec.org or at the Parks & Recreation Office. Full payment is due at the time of registration.
Please refer to the section on Payment & Fees for details on current pricing.

Scheduling:

Any requests for schedule changes must be submitted IN WRITING. The Department's normal program refund policies apply to Vacation Camp (please visit our website for more details on Department policies).

Payment & Fees

General Payment Policies

All payments are due in full prior to attendance at the program

- Payments may be made online or dropped off at the Vernon Parks & Recreation office
- All communications regarding payments will be made by e-mail
- Checks returned for any reason will incur a service fee of $25.00. Repeated returned checks may result in personal checks no longer being accepted as payment.

Tuition Fees & Payment Schedule

R.E.K.	
Drop-in Rate	$29.00 per day
Monthly Rate	Based on $21.00 per day

Tuition Fees: Must pre-register for either fee option below

Payment Schedule: Payment is due at the time of registration

Vacation Camp

Schedule: Payment is due in full at the time of registration

Tuition: Sessions that include a field trip may incur an additional cost. Additional fees will fully cover the cost of the field trip, including additional staffing, busing, entrance/participation fees, equipment, etc.

Other Fees

Late Schedule Change Registrations received less than 5 days before the program start will result in a 20% additional fee

Late Pickup Fee- First Instance:

- $10.00 for the first 15 minutes, + $1 per minute for each additional minute after 15.
- Subsequent late pickups will result in a higher fee and may result in dismissal from the program. Late pick-up fees must be paid in full before the student is permitted to return to the program.

Refunds

- Refunds are not granted in the event of a suspension or expulsion from the program.
- Refunds will be granted in accordance with the Vernon Parks and Recreation refund policy.

General Program Information

Staff

Each site will have a Site Director who is responsible for the daily operations of the program. Each site will have a minimum of one staff member for every ten children.

Our staff members are carefully selected and have passed a national and local background check. Staff members are additionally trained in CPR/First Aid/AED, Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting, game leadership, positive behavioral modification strategies, and other relevant topics.

Facilities

R.E.K.

The partnership between Vernon Parks & Recreation and Vernon Public Schools allows us to hold programs at the schools. The programs are based in the cafeteria of each school. The gym, playground, and athletic fields are also available on most days.

We expect that all program participants and their families will help us respect the schools by following school guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, parking procedures, dress code, and code of conduct. Please refer to the school's student handbook for more information on these topics. School personnel are not responsible for overseeing any part of the R.E.K. program. Any questions regarding the program should be directed to on-site program staff or the Parks & Recreation Office.

Vacation Camp

Vacation Camp is held at Center 375 (375 Hartford Turnpike, lower level). Families should use the lower side entrance of the building for drop off and pick up. Amenities at this facility include a large community room, smaller program rooms, athletic fields, and a playground.

Daily Schedule

R.E.K.

Arrival:

R.E.K.- At the dismissal of the school day, children are expected to head straight from their classroom to the cafeteria. R.E.K. staff members are **NOT** responsible for any child until they arrive and check-in.

Homework/ Quiet Activity:

R.E.K.- Each day will include quiet activity time. During this time children will be required to remain seated and engage in a quiet activity. Staff will do their best to assist with homework, but due to the group setting, intensive one-to-one help may not be possible. Children who do not have homework will be encouraged to read during this time. R.E.K. has a small selection of books, but we encourage you to send a book from home if they will not be working on homework.

Snack:

R.E.K.- One snack will be provided each day and snacks vary by day. If your child requires more than one snack for the afternoon or is unsatisfied with the choices offered, you may pack them an

extra snack for R.E.K. Staff carefully monitor snack ingredients for the safety of children with food allergies. It is very important that information regarding food allergies or restrictions is included on the registration form.

Recreation

A variety of recreational activities will be offered each day, with a preference towards outdoor activities and physical recreation. All children will be encouraged to try activities but will be given an alternative choice if they decline to participate.
Physical Recreation Activities may include team sports, group games, dance, and playground time. We understand that children have varying levels of athletic ability and coordination so the emphasis will be on fitness, fun, good sportsmanship, and skill building rather than winning/losing. All children will be encouraged to engage in a minimum of 20 minutes of physical activity per day.

Other Recreation Activities may include arts & crafts, board games, Legos, Bingo, etc. Movies or computer lab time may be offered in the case of inclement weather or consecutive early dismissal days, but these and other "screen time" activities will be kept to a limited basis and offered only as a secondary choice to physical activities and social group games. We encourage you to support this goal by not sending electronics with your child to R.E.K.

Pick-up

R.E.K.- All children must be picked up by **6:00 p.m.** Please refer to the section on Operational Policies for more detailed information on the sign-out procedures, and the section on Payment & Fees for late pick-up fees.

Vacation Camp

Arrival:

Children can be dropped off beginning at the start time indicated during registration. All children must be walked into the building by an adult. The program is held in Center 375, which is accessible through the side entrance on the lower level of the building.

Snack:

All children should bring a morning snack, a lunch, an afternoon snack, and a water bottle. Refrigeration is not available for lunches.

Recreation

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Other Recreation Activities may include arts & crafts, board games, Legos, coloring, Bingo, etc. Movies may be offered in the case of inclement weather, but these and other "screen time" activities will be kept to a limited basis and offered only as a secondary choice to physical activities and social group games. We encourage you to support this goal by not sending electronics with your child to R.E.K.

Pick-up

	All children must be picked up by the designated program end time. Please refer to the section on Operational Policies for more detailed information on the sign-out procedures, and the section on Payment & Fees for late pick-up fees.

Operational Policies

Attendance

The Site Directors will have a daily attendance list showing all children registered each day. If your child will NOT be attending the program on a scheduled day, please do **both** of the following:

1. Notify Parks & Recreation via e-mail that your child will not be in attendance
2. Notify your child's school, using the method of communication they prefer, what your child should do instead at the end of the day

R.E.K.

If your child is registered for the program but does not arrive at R.E.K. at the end of school, the Site Director will take the following steps to ensure your child is safe and accounted for:

1. Check the school attendance list to see if your child was in school that day
2. Check with the school office to see if your child was signed out from school or sent home on the bus
3. Contact the primary parent/guardian, leaving a message if there is no answer, to notify you that your child did not arrive at R.E.K. as expected

Staff will make every effort to ensure your child is accounted for if they do not arrive at R.E.K. as expected. R.E.K. staff are not responsible for any child until they physically arrive at the designated R.E.K. meeting location and are signed in.

Attire

Participants should abide by the school's dress code policy (detailed information on this policy can be found in the school's Student Handbook). Participants MUST have appropriate footwear (sneakers) to play in the gym, run on the athletic fields, or climb on the playground. Children wearing flip-flops, high-heeled shoes, open-toe sandals, or snow boots that do not have a change of shoes or refuse to change their shoes may be directed to an alternative seated activity.

One of the goals of our programs is to encourage outdoor play whenever weather conditions are appropriate. Please send your child with outdoor clothing that is appropriate for the weather, including coats, snow pants, boots, hats, gloves, etc. You may send your child with sunscreen but staff cannot physically assist a child with applying it (verbal instruction may be given). A child who does not have appropriate clothing for an offered outdoor activity may be directed to an alternative seated indoor activity.

Bathroom Breaks

Scheduled group bathroom breaks will be offered, and participants will additionally be allowed to use the bathroom upon request during program hours. Bathroom breaks will be limited to no more than 2 people at a time for multi-stall bathrooms, and all participants are expected to behave appropriately in the bathroom. All participants in the program must be fully toilet trained and able to manage the bathroom by themselves. Staff are not allowed to assist a child with toileting. A participant who has three or more bathroom accidents during the school year will be considered not fully toilet trained and will be removed from the program until the issue is resolved. In the event of a bathroom accident, a parent/guardian will be contacted for immediate pick-up and appropriate documentation will be completed for the parent/guardian to sign.

Children with Special Needs

The Vernon Parks and Recreation Department, in accordance with ADA, accepts children with special needs in an integrated group setting when it is determined that the child can best be served in this program's environment. All program participants are expected to abide by the Behavioral Expectations for the safety of all program participants and staff. Please see the section on Behavior Expectations and Disciplinary Procedures for more information. A supplemental information form is available upon request at the Parks and Recreation Office and should be submitted prior to the start of the program. The more information provided to us about your child and the resources they need, the more readily we will be able to meet those needs and ensure the safety of your child and others in our program.

Vernon Parks & Recreation does NOT provide one-to-one childcare. All enrolled children must be able to safely function in a group setting with group supervision.

Early Dismissal Days & Snow Days

R.E.K.

R.E.K.- On ***scheduled*** early dismissal days, the program will run from the end of the school day until **6:00 p.m.**

In the event of an **unplanned early dismissal day, all children ***MUST*** be picked up by **4:00 p.m.** A late fee will be assessed for any students not picked up by the designated end time**

Vacation Camp

If a Vacation Camp day needs to be canceled due to inclement weather, notifications will be done in the following ways:

- An announcement will be listed on our website at www.vernonrec.org
- An e-mail will be sent to the notification email listed on your account

Emergency Procedures

Each program site has a detailed Emergency Action Plan (EAP), created with guidance from the Town of Vernon, Vernon Police & Fire Departments, and Vernon Human Resources. Many of our EAP procedures reflect those used during the school day and should be familiar to your child. Staff are trained in emergency management and drills will be held periodically throughout the school year so that all program participants will feel comfortable responding should an emergency situation arise.

Should your child be involved in an accident or emergency situation during program hours, staff will take the following steps:

1. Assess the nature of the accident or emergency to determine the appropriate response
2. Contact appropriate emergency first responders and/or administer First Aid as necessary
3. Implement any necessary EAP procedures to ensure the immediate safety of all program participants and staff
4. Contact the primary parent or guardian as listed on the child's registration form. If that person cannot be reached immediately, a brief message will be left and the staff will continue to call Emergency Contacts in the order they are listed until someone is reached directly

**If emergency first responders determine that your child needs to be transported in an ambulance and the child's emergency contact is not on-site at that time, a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital. Staff members are not allowed to transport any program participants in their own vehicles*

Extra-Curricular Activities

R.E.K.

If your child participates in another school activity (i.e. tutoring, chorus, sports, safety patrol, etc.) the child may attend their activity and then join the program after the activity has finished. Please keep the Site Director informed of the days and times of these activities, and inform the activity director that the child should go to R.E.K. after.

If your child is leaving R.E.K. to go to an activity, the coach or responsible adult for that activity must sign the child out of the program. That person must be included on your Authorized Pick-Up list.

Late Pick-Up

All children must be picked up from R.E.K. and Vacation Camp by the designated end time. We understand unplanned emergency situations arise, so if you are unable to pick up your child by the close of the program it is your responsibility to send someone else from your authorized pickup list to sign out your child. After the end time, staff will attempt to contact the primary parent/guardian, and if that person cannot be reached the emergency contacts will be called in the order they are listed until someone is reached. If no one can be reached by 30 minutes past the end time, the Vernon Police will be contacted for assistance. Repeat late pick-ups may result in dismissal from the program. Please see the section on Payment & Fees for late pick-up charges.

Personal Items/Electronics

Vernon Parks & Recreation is NOT responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. Participants are encouraged to leave such items at home or leave them zipped in their backpacks for the duration of the program. The use of personal electronics (i.e. cell phones, tablets, video games, smart watches, etc.) during program hours is only allowed at the discretion of the Site Director. Staff will periodically monitor the content accessed on personal electronic devices, but the child is ultimately responsible for ensuring that inappropriate material is not accessed. Accessing or sharing inappropriate materials on personal electronic devices may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.

Any item brought to the program that is deemed dangerous or inappropriate, or is used in an inappropriate manner, will be confiscated and held by the Site Director and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the day. Bringing a weapon or other dangerous items is grounds for dismissal from the program, and the Vernon Police may be called in for support.

Parking

Parking is available in the parking lots of each school and at Center 375 for Vacation Camp. Vehicles must be parked in an appropriate parking area and not in the fire lanes. Please remember that buses have the right of way at all school sites. More specific information about parking and driving on school property can be found in the school's Student Handbook. Repeated violations of the school's parking lot procedures may create an unsafe environment and result in dismissal from the program.

Pick-up Policies

Our program sites will utilize iPads for daily sign-in/sign-out. Each child MUST be picked up by an authorized pick-up person each day. Anyone who comes to pick up a child will be required to show a valid photo I.D. upon request (ex. driver's license, high school/middle school identification card w/photo, etc.) No one under the age of 16 will be allowed to pick up a child from the program.

At the time of pick-up, a child will be considered signed out when a person on the child's authorized pick-up list arrives at the school and makes contact with a staff member at the designated pick-up location. The staff member will then mark the child as "signed out" on the iPad, noting who picked them up. Your child will not be allowed to leave with anyone who is not designated as an "Authorized Pick Up" person on their registration form. If you would like to modify this list a written request must be sent to the Site Director or Parks & Recreation Office.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A CHILD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM SITE WITH AN UNAUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL. THIS INCLUDES INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY BE LISTED ON THE REGISTRATION FORM BUT ARE UNABLE TO CORROBORATE THEIR IDENTITY WITH A VALID PHOTO ID.

This policy is for the safety of each child in our program and we appreciate your cooperation.

Screen Time

As a Parks & Recreation Department, we prioritize outdoor time and active play when offering activities to program participants. In the event of unusual circumstances such as extended periods of inclement weather, "screen time" activities such as movies or computer lab time may be offered. All movies shown will be rated G or PG only. If you would prefer that your child be only allowed to watch G-rated movies or no movies at programs, please notify the Site Director of your preference.

COVID-19 Guidelines

Vernon Parks and Recreation will be following recommendations and guidelines provided by Vernon Public Schools, the Office of Early Childhood, and state and federal agencies. Amended guidelines will be provided prior to the start of the program.

Behavior Expectations and Disciplinary Procedures

All children, families, and staff participating in programs are expected to behave in a safe and respectful manner.

Program Rules

Violation of rules may result in disciplinary action or removal from the program.

- All program participants must conduct themselves in a safe manner. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Remain in designated program area at all times
  - Use all program equipment only in the intended way
  - Refrain from engaging in horseplay or rough play (keep hands & feet to yourself)
  - No weapons, projectiles, alcohol, drugs, or illegal substances allowed
  - Participants must keep their bodies under control and engage in appropriate activities for the area (i.e. no running in the cafeteria, no wildly throwing sports equipment in the gym, etc.)
- All program participants must be respectful of the program space. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Cleaning up after an activity is complete
  - Use all equipment and facilities only for their intended purpose
  - Wear appropriate attire in accordance with the school dress code & activity
- All program participants must be respectful to staff and their peers. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Use appropriate language
  - No name-calling, put-downs, or bullying activities
  - Good sportsmanship
  - Follow directions given by program staff & report any problems to a staff member immediately

Behavior Management and Disciplinary Procedures

Staff will focus on positive reinforcement and prevention of negative behavior, by praising the positive and attempting to downplay the negative in an effort to bring out the best in every child. We believe disciplinary procedures should vary according to age, individuality, and the development level of each child. Staff will use positive guidance, redirection, continuous supervision and set clear limits. Activities that help the child reflect on behaviors and explore alternative responses, such as writing apology letters or completing a peer mediation or reflection exercise, may be utilized in response to undesirable behaviors.

While children are in attendance at the program the staff shall not engage in, nor allow, abusive, neglectful, physical, corporal, humiliating, or frightening treatment or punishment, including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, or striking children, and shall not tie nor bind children and shall not physically restrain children except for the protection and safety of the child or others, using least restrictive methods, as appropriate.

Actions that are unsafe, disrespectful, or disruptive to the program environment may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action is implemented at the discretion of the Site Director, Program Coordinator, and Administrative staff at Parks & Recreation and varies in accordance with the severity of the offense.

Minor disciplinary issues will be addressed by asking the child to sit out of an activity for a designated period of time. A behavior reflection form may be used to help the student reflect on their role in the incident. The behavior will be discussed with the child and alternative strategies for handling the situation in the future will be reviewed. Repeat or major disciplinary issues, including unsafe behaviors, will result in a written incident report to be signed by an adult upon pickup. The child may be removed

from further activities for the day at the discretion of the Site Director. Depending on the severity of the behavior, additional action may include requiring immediate pick-up from the program or a suspension from the program of 1-5 days.

The Vernon Parks & Recreation Department reserves the right to determine the seriousness of the infraction and issue consequences accordingly in order to preserve the safety and well-being of ALL program participants and staff. In the case of an extended suspension or expulsion, behavior records may be reviewed when considering enrollment for future Vernon Parks & Recreation programs. Refunds are NOT given for suspensions/expulsions.

When deemed necessary by program staff, incidents of misconduct will be documented on a Vernon Parks and Recreation Department Incident Form. Forms will be presented to a parent or guardian and require a signature at that time. Participants will not be permitted to return to R.E.K. until a parent or guardian has sign the incident report. A signed incident report is an acknowledgment you have received and revied this information contained within the incident report.

A. Non-Physical Behavior

Includes but is not limited to: not following directions, use of inappropriate language, disrespectful behavior towards staff and/or peers, leaving the program area, along with any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category.

If non-physical behavior should occur at the R.E.K. program, the counselor will issue a verbal warning explaining the inappropriate behavior to the student. The student is advised that the next warning will result in a written incident report. If the discussed behavior should continue, a written incident report will be completed and a parent/guardian will be notified. Repeated behaviors will result in further disciplinary action, which may include a suspension from the program. A first suspension issued is 1-3 days based on the seriousness of the infraction. If the behaviors continue after this point, further consequences may include the following: an extended suspension of 3-5 days, removal from the program.

B. Physical Behavior (Mild)

Includes but is not limited to: pushing, shoving, spitting, tripping, and throwing any item, along with any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category.

If mild physical behavior should occur at the R.E.K. program, a verbal warning will be given to the child, a written incident report will be completed and a parent/guardian will be notified. Program administration will be notified and a 1-3 day suspension may be issued based on the seriousness of the infraction. If the behaviors continue after this point further consequences may include the following: an extended suspension of 3-5 days, removal from the program.

C. Physical Behavior (Severe) & Bullying

Includes but is not limited to: punching, pinching, bullying, biting, hitting, kicking, revealing inappropriate areas of the body (pantsing, flashing) along with any other infraction deemed inappropriate for this category. Please refer to the school's handbook for more information about behaviors constituting bullying.

If severe physical behavior or bullying should occur at the R.E.K. program a verbal warning will be given to the child, a written incident report will be completed, and the parent/guardian will be notified. A 1-5 day suspension will be issued based on the seriousness of the infraction, and immediate pickup from the program may be required. If the behaviors continue after this point, further consequences may include the following: an extended suspension or removal from the program. The Vernon Parks & Recreation administrators reserve the right to issue an expulsion from the program for a first offense if the physical behavior is deemed to be a severe threat to the safety of program participants and/or staff.

Photographing Program Participants

We are very proud of the children in our R.E.K. program and like to tell the community about them. Therefore, we frequently photograph the children to publish in our recreation flyers, local newspapers, and the Parks and Recreation Department's scrapbook.

We obviously encourage this, however, we are also sensitive to safety reasons unique to an individual family. It may not be wise for pictures of a child to appear in any media. If you so desire, we will do our best to ensure your child is not showcased or named in any media. Image release/consent forms are available upon request from the Vernon Parks & Recreation office.