



JAMESTOWN TEEN CENTER

Student and Parent Handbook

The Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department would like to welcome you and your teen to our facility. To ensure that your teen gets the most out of our programs, we would like for you, along with your teen, to thoroughly read through this Handbook. This document is designed to inform parents/guardians and youth of what the Teen Center has to offer.

Philosophy

The Jamestown Teen Center provides high quality programming to the youth of Jamestown adhering to the Rhode Island Department of Education statewide school-age and youth program improvement policies and practices (Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment process). The Rhode Island Program Quality standards include providing a safe and supportive environment to all youth participants while also ensuring programs offer opportunities for positive interaction and maximum engagement.

Purpose

The purpose of the Teen Center to empower young people to reach their fullest potential and be productive citizens of their community by providing opportunities in education, leadership development, recreation, socialization, volunteerism, and workforce development.

History

The Jamestown Teen Center came about as a grassroots organization. The original idea came about as a product of an 8th grade Civics project in 2005. Eighth graders recognized teen boredom as a problem in their community and a group of students addressed the Town Council with a proposal to establish a Teen Center. The Teen Center in its early stages was a calendar of events with scheduled hours at the Senior Center or Library, events and field trips. The Teen Center did not have its own space. Five years later, with the support of the community and the Rhode Island Foundation, the renovations in the Recreation Center were completed and the program has evolved into what it is today.

About the Staff

Molly Conlon has been a Teen Center supervisor since October 2010. She graduated from Plymouth State University with a degree in Early Education (K-3). She has worked as a camp counselor for four years in Jamestown and as a first grade aide in New Hampshire. Molly enjoys the outdoors, being with family and friends and traveling to various music festivals.

Program Description

The Teen Center offers an unstructured drop-in center as well a variety of structured programs and activities for youth grades 5th-12th. Many of the programs are available free of charge though some activities do charge a nominal fee to cover material costs and transportation.

The drop-in center is available free of charge after school and on weekends for two separate age groups, 5th-8th graders and 9th-12th graders. The drop-in center includes the Teen Center lounge and computer lab; youth will generally have access to the lobby and gym. Occasionally the gym and lobby are reserved for other programming and the schedule varies weekly. At this time, the lobby and gym are to be used by the designated age group only. Participants are allowed to come and go up to five times per day. Staff is not responsible for teens when they leave the Teen Center. Parents/guardians are expected to discuss with their teen when it is appropriate to leave the facility and with whom.

Structured activities are offered on weekday evenings after 6pm and are open for participants of all ages, grades 5th-12th. Structured activities include Adolescents Making Programs for Teens (AMPT) which meets on Monday. AMPT is the Teen Center advisory council which plans community service projects, social events and encourages leadership development. Wednesday evenings offers opportunities for community service including youth representation on the Board of Directors and the Prevention Coalition. Wednesday evenings will also have monthly guest speakers and other educational opportunities. Thursday evenings offers a session-format for a nominal fee; youth can sign up for a 6-8 week long series including topics such as cooking, sports, filmmaking, arts or theater.

The Teen Center has a partnership with the East Bay Youth Centers, a program of East Bay Community Action. Their case managers are contracted by the state to assist youth ages 14-24 find part and full-time work as well as summer work experiences. The employment opportunities are available at non-profit agencies as well as for-profit businesses. The case managers are available at the Teen Center on a weekly basis or by appointment.

The Teen Center also offers an informal work referral program, Teen Job Corps. Teens are referred to a member of the community who has passed a background check for tasks including yard work, housework, pet care, and babysitting. The Teen Center will follow up with the worker and employer to ensure work was completed and can help the youth prepare for future job referrals. Employers pay the youth directly for their work.

The Teen Center also regularly schedules special events and field trips. The Teen Center hosts dances 4 times per year; dances are for participants in grades 5th-8th or 7th-9th. Field trips to amusement parks, sporting events, ice skating, Dave and Busters and other sites are generally on Saturday afternoons during the school year and Thursdays in the summer. The Teen Center sponsors special events a few times per year including an overnight Lock-In, basketball tournament, Skatefest and Jamestown Day.

As a participant in the Jamestown Teen Center, youth have many more options for after school activities. The Teen Center is one of the founding partners of iNCASE, Newport County After

School Excitement. iNCASE is a collaboration of after school providers to increase youth choice in activities beyond school. iNCASE offers multi-session programming on Tuesdays and Thursdays in October-November and March-April. These programs are free of charge due to the generosity of the Newport County Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation and the Jesse B. Cox Foundation.

Hours of Operation

Drop-in Center hours may vary per week, check website/calendar for updated schedule. The Teen Center typically offers 26-30 hours per week of drop-in time.

The Teen Center observes town and national holidays; special open hours may exist on these days. Hours and program schedules are subject to change; Recreation Staff will make every effort to keep you and your teen informed. Check our website for updates at www.jamestownri.net/teen/teen/html.

*Please note: all schedules are made based on Town of Jamestown public school calendar.

Registration

Teen Center participants must be in the 5th through 12th grades or the equivalent if home schooled. Once a student has completed the 5th grade, they are welcome to register at the Teen Center. There are annual orientations in September and January for new members; dates will be posted on website and in local newspapers.

All Teen Center participants must fill out the Teen Center Code of Conduct and Waiver Forms and have them signed by their parent or legal guardian. Parents should carefully review this Handbook and the Code of Conduct with their teen before signing. Upon submission of these forms, all parents/guardians will receive a follow up phone call to ensure correct information. Registration forms are available at the Teen Center and Recreation Office, 41 Conanicus Ave. Teens and their parent or legal guardian are required to provide the following information:

1. Current contact information, address, age and school.
2. Medical information, emergency contacts, and allergies.
3. Release of Liability Forms, signed.
4. Email addresses are strongly encouraged. A majority of notices are distributed via email.

Developmental Stages of Youth

It is important to understand that young people go through various developmental stages and that some may develop at different rates. In some areas young people may develop quickly and in others more slowly. They may act like teenagers much of the time, but other times, more like young children. These stages are distinct phases in emotional, mental and physical developments of a child. Here are some developmental characteristics/milestones commonly seen within youth grades seven through 12 or ages 12 to 17.

Early Adolescence (Ages 12-14)

During these ages youth may be entering puberty and going through various physical changes, which they may be concerned about. They may become more concerned with their clothes and body image and lack self confidence. Youth may be feeling pressure from their peers and are highly concerned with what their peer groups think of them. During these ages youth begin to come into their own, they begin to make more of their own decisions regarding friends, school, hobbies, etc. Youth may also experience a strong sense of moodiness and lack of affection towards family. At this age youth begin to develop complex thoughts and begin to gain a better understanding about making good decisions. They may also begin to articulate thoughts and concerns more affectively. Youth at this age are very interested in being independent and having more responsibility. Time with adults is often focused on exploring the adult world or issues of their own identity. They are focused on themselves and on their peers.

Middle Adolescence (Ages 15-17)

During this period teens will have matured more physically but many may still struggle with their views on self-image. They may still be highly concerned with body image. Therefore, eating disorders are commonly seen during this age group in some females and males. During this age teens develop a stronger sense of personality and opinions. During middle adolescence you may see that conflict between families and teens decreases as well as demonstrating of more independence. During this age teens may begin to develop stronger, trusting relationships with peers. Between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, teens are developing stronger work habits and show more interest and concern for future endeavors (Eg. College, work, etc).

*Research of developmental stages found from Centers for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/> and through the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Youth Rights and Responsibilities

The following is a list of rights and responsibilities to guide participant behavior at the Teen Center. The list is not to be all inclusive. Parents should promote cooperation and agreement between the home and the Teen Center in an attempt to develop citizenship and high standards of behavior in our youth.

Youth have the right to:

- Participate in all Teen Center activities in a safe and supportive environment.
- Be supervised by highly qualified staff.
- Use the “Tab” system to purchase snacks and drinks. The Teen Center offers free fruit on school days. Other snacks and drinks are available for a minimal charge. Registered participants may borrow up to one dollar for snacks.
- Participate in service to the Teen Center to work off negative tab charges. Service to the Teen Center includes cleaning up program space and helping with various tasks.
- Get in contact with their parent or guardian. Participants must ask a Staff member for permission before using the Teen Center phone. The Teen Center phone number is 401-423-7261.
 - Calls are not to exceed 5 minutes unless it is an actual emergency
 - Participants are allowed to answer a ringing phone appropriately (ie. “Teen Center, this is Michelle. How can I help you?”)

- To utilize the Computer/Homework Lab when it is open.
 - Priority use goes to those participants using computer time for homework Please limit internet surfing to 30 minutes.
 - Use of Social Networking programs, including Myspace, Facebook, AIM, etc. is closely monitored.
 - The downloading of programs or questionable material is NOT ALLOWED.
 - Please save any personal work on your own disk or flash drive. Youth must use staff computer to print materials.
 - Close all programs when finished.
 - No food or drink is allowed in the Computer Area.
 - No horseplay or any type of physical exertion is allowed in the Computer Area.
 - After leaving computer area clean up and push in all chairs.

Youth are responsible for:

- Abiding by the Youth Code of Conduct at all times while at the Teen Center, Recreation Center or Teen Center sponsored activity.
- Being courteous and respectful of adults and fellow participants at all times.
- Showing respect for Town property and personal property of others.
- Following the instruction of Recreation Staff. If a participant disobeys any Recreation employee either by action or word, a parent/guardian will be notified and possible suspension may occur.
- Signing in and out **EVERY** time they enter or exit the Teen Center. They must use their correct first and last name, and the current time when entering or leaving, and write legibly. Each student can only leave five times a day.
- Reporting any potentially dangerous and/or illegal situations regarding weapons, drugs, alcohol, fireworks, fights, property damage, theft, etc. or has information regarding such to a staff member.
- Obeying general facility rules.
 - Bicycles/Rollerblades/Roller skates/Scooters/Skateboards/Skate shoes(“heelies”) & Mopeds - The mentioned items may not be used or brought inside the Recreation or Teen Centers. Bicycles must be left in the bike rack outside. The Town of Jamestown assumes no responsibility for thefts or vandalism. Skateboards, roller skates, rollerblades, skate shoes, scooters, and mopeds are not to be ridden inside the Recreation or Teen Center facility. All skateboards and scooters must be placed in the appropriate location upon entering the facility. Failure to do so will result in the confiscation of the items to the Jamestown Police Department.
 - Cell Phones - Cell phones and pagers must be put on silent or vibrate while inside the Teen Center. Any inappropriate behavior regarding text messaging and/or bullying through cell phones will not be tolerated. Parents will be notified of inappropriate behavior and possible suspension may occur.
 - Dress - Participants at the Jamestown Teen Center have the responsibility to dress and appear in a manner that promotes a safe, neat, clean and wholesome environment. Participants are expected to dress appropriately, for example clothing

must be worn over bathing suits. The final authority for what is appropriate, safe, clean, and non-disruptive shall rest with the Teen Center staff. When necessary, the Jamestown School District dress code will be implemented to ensure adherence to the rules and regulations mentioned here of.

- Fireworks/Flammables - Teens are not to be in possession of fireworks of any kind while at the Teen Center, Recreation Center or surrounding area, or at any Teen Center sponsored activity, nor are they to have possession of matches, lighters or other combustible materials.
- Interpersonal Relationships - Appropriate personal relationships are encouraged. The Teen Center policy is one of “hands off.” Holding hands, arm-in-arm, sitting on laps, hugging and kissing is not appropriate while at the Teen Center. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Swearing, Profanity - Participants are not to use profanity or vulgar language. Swearing will not be tolerated. Participants will be counseled to be aware of their language. The circumstances will determine if more severe consequences are needed. Participants can be charged for swearing after being warned numerous times.
- Threats - Threats of personal injury upon other participants or Staff are strictly prohibited and will be dealt with in a swift and severe manner.
- Tobacco, Possession of Tobacco and Smoking - If a participant of the Teen Center has in his/her possession, tobacco or cigarettes, cigarette lighter, or matches, this is ground for suspension. Participants who are with other participants who are smoking should make a responsible decision to remove themselves from this area. Otherwise, they too, may be suspended.

RULES VS. LAWS

The following are not only against Teen Center and Recreation Department rules, but are against the law. The Police Department will be notified if any teen is caught breaking the law.

- Assault & Battery
- Sexual Assault
- Gambling - Any form of gambling will not be tolerated.
- Harassment /Hate Crimes
- Hazing - It is against the law for a participant to engage in any hazing activity or threaten to engage in any activity that causes or is likely to cause harm or personal degradation to another participant.
- Illegal Substance, Drug and Alcohol
- Serious Injury, Attempting to Cause - If a participant attempts to cause serious injury to another person, except in the case of self-defense, it will be recommended they be expelled permanently from the Teen Center.
- Theft - Participants have the responsibility for taking care of their own possessions. Participants are discouraged from bringing large amounts of money or valuable items to the Teen Center. The Town of Jamestown is not responsible for any lost or stolen items brought by a participant in the facility.
- Vandalism - Damaging town property or the property of others will not be tolerated. In any matter regarding such situations however, incidents will be written at all times

by the Teen Center staff to keep a record of such behavior. Teens and/or parents may be liable to pay for damages.

- Weapons Brought - Any participant will be suspended and possibly expelled for possession of any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object at the Jamestown Recreation and Teen Center or at any Teen Center sponsored activity.

Staff Rights and Responsibilities

Staff have the right to:

- Work is a safe and respectful work environment. Disrespect to staff will not be tolerated.
- Discipline negative behaviors appropriately and will administer with firmness, fairness and consistency. The Teen Center utilizes a “Tab” system for all participants. Participants can earn money on their tab for positive behaviors and lose money on their tab for negative behaviors. Common behaviors resulting in a tab charge include swearing and leaving messes without picking up. Participants who have negative five dollars on their tab will be asked to participate in community service, pay cash for the charges or a phone call home will be the result.
- Suspend participants who exhibit continued and willful disobedience.

Staff have the responsibility to:

- Treat all Teen Center participants and families with respect (i.e. promote positive and effective communication & help youth feel valued as members of a group)
- Respect the property of others including cleaning up after myself, supervising youth's clean-up efforts after activities and requesting permission before handling anything belonging to staff, youth, or their families.
- Maintain an appropriate and professional appearance (i.e. no offensive or suggestive language printed on clothing or accessories).
- Maintain confidentiality, impartiality, and professional boundaries (i.e. no evidence of the following: sexual behavior, possession of anything deemed to be a weapon; no possession of tobacco, drugs, alcohol or drug paraphernalia) while at the Teen Center or on Recreation property.
- Enter the Teen Center free from the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Use appropriate role-modeling language (i.e. no swearing, vulgar, or offensive language).
- Approach all conflict using a youth-centered approach (i.e. approach all conflict in an unthreatening manner, get all sides of the conflict and remain objective and neutral, help young people understand the effects of their behavior on others, engage youth in identifying possible solutions, and follow-up before youth leave for the day).

Emergency Procedures

Responsibility of Staff

Each staff member shall assume responsibility for emergency care involving a youth while he/she is under our program supervision.

All Teen Center staff members are to be certified in CPR, First Aid, and AED within the first six months of hire. No staff shall administer until CPR, First Aid, or AED until certified.

Parents and guardians will be notified of any participant injury. For severe injury (massive bleeding, unconsciousness) rescue will be called, Jamestown EMS.

Staff is to submit an incident/accident report to Recreation Director prior to end of shift (Refer to Appendix for example report).

Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills are required twice per year to test fire alarm systems and fire reporting procedures under simulated emergency conditions. The Town of Jamestown, Recreation Department requires that all youth programs conduct the fire drill during the first two months of the school year. Such drills ensure familiarity with exits which in turn ensures that everyone gets out of the building promptly and in an organized manner to a place of safety. All participants of the Teen Center will be required to participate in scheduled and unscheduled fire drills.

All individuals will be required to evacuate the building during a drill and in case of an actual emergency and report to the designated meeting place. The meeting place for the Recreation Center is the Trattoria Simpatico parking lot near the back parking lot of the Recreation Center. There are maps at various places throughout the building.

Teen Center staff will use the Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet to determine everyone has exited the building safely. Please check in with Staff at the meeting place before leaving the area. This ensures the safety of participants as well as Staff and emergency responders.

Building Closures

The Teen Center and Recreation Center are closed during inclement weather such as severe snow storms or threats of hurricanes. Recreation staff will make every effort to inform all participants and scheduled staff members of closures. These announcements can also be found on our website: www.jamestownri.net/teen/teen.html or our voicemail 401-423-7261.

Emergency Information

It is imperative that Teen Center is notified of any contact information changes. Please notify staff immediately of any phone number, address or email changes. Please provide emergency contacts of who to notify in case parent or guardians are unavailable. Update requests will be issued annually at the beginning of each school year.

Parents as Volunteers

Research shows that parent involvement is an important factor in positive youth development. Youth who have their parents involved in their school, after school and daily lives do better in school, are less likely to engage in risky behavior and become more successful adults. The Teen Center expects all parents volunteer ten hours per school year.

There are many ways for parents to become involved in Teen Center activities. Parents are encouraged to serve on the Board of Directors, Prevention Coalition, lead one-day activities like arts and crafts, or lead a session-format workshop such as an 8 session cooking class. Parents can help with fundraising efforts, chaperone events and field trips. Parents can even sign up to be tutors in a particular subject or act as a mentor for job shadowing experiences.

Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department
Teen Center Registration Form

The Jamestown Teen Center requires that each teen who participates in activities and events is registered by a parent or guardian. The following information should be provided by the parent or guardian and then updated as necessary. All the information will be kept confidential.

Participant Information:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Birthdate: _____ Age: _____ Male: ___ Female: ___
School attending: _____ Grade: _____
Home address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Teen Email: _____ Teen Cell Phone: _____

Participant Medical Information:

Allergies: No ___ Yes _____
Current or past medical conditions our staff should be aware of: _____
Please list: _____

Parent/Guardian Information:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Email: (please print clearly) _____
Home Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Relationship to participant: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Email: (please print clearly) _____
Home Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Relationship to participant: _____

Emergency Contact Person - Other than Parent Listed Above

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Media Release: I give the Jamestown Teen Center permission to use my daughter/son's name and/or photograph in the press/media when releasing information about the accomplishments and highlights of the Teen Center.

Signature: _____

Viewing Agreement: I give permission for my daughter/son to view PG/PG 13 movies that are being shown at the Teen Center and that have been previously viewed by staff and are deemed appropriate for youth attending the Teen Center.

Signature: _____

Gaming Agreement: I give permission for my daughter/son to play and watch video games rated T for Teens or below, and that are deemed appropriate by Teen Center staff.

Signature: _____

Volunteer Commitment

I agree to volunteer ten hours per school year while my teen is a participant at the Jamestown Teen Center. My preference for volunteering is in the following areas:

- _____ Serve on the Friends of Jamestown Youth Board of Directors (meets monthly)
- _____ Serve on the Prevention Coalition (meets monthly)
- _____ Lead one-day activity in _____ on a Saturday afternoon.
- _____ Lead a session-format workshop in _____ on Thursdays in Winter/Spring.
- _____ Help with fundraising efforts (bake sales, car washes, etc)
- _____ Chaperone events (dances 4x per year, overnights, basketball tournaments, etc)
- _____ Chaperone field trips (including helping to drive if necessary)
- _____ Tutor in _____ subject/s
- _____ Act as a mentor for job shadowing experiences, my field of employment is _____.

Signature: _____

Waiver of Liability and Statement of Understanding: We (parent/ guardian) and (youth) hereby state that we have read, understand, and agree to the rules and stipulations accompanying this waiver as set out by the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department. I further hereby release and discharge the Jamestown Teen Center, the Town of Jamestown and all host sponsors of Teen Center programming of and from any and all claims, demands, damages, causes of action, and liability whatsoever which may arise or grow out of my daughter/son's participation in Teen Center programs.

Youth Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**Jamestown Teen Center
Youth Code of Conduct**

Youth participating in Jamestown Teen Center programs and activities on or off site are required to conduct themselves according to the following Code of Conduct.

I, _____ will:

- 1) Be responsible for my own behavior/conduct.
- 2) Support and abide by the Teen Center staff and follow their directions.
- 3) Practice good citizenship, leadership, and have a positive attitude at all times.
- 4) Be honest and trustworthy in my participation at the Teen Center.
- 5) Show respect to others (peers and adults) by being courteous and respectful. I will not intimidate, bully, put others down or be disrespectful in any way.
- 6) Use appropriate language: I will not swear or use insulting, vulgar or offensive language.
- 7) Maintain acceptable noise levels inside the entire Recreation Center and surrounding property.
- 8) Be free from the possession and consumption of drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco.
- 9) Leave all bikes and skateboards/long boards in their designated area.
- 10) Refrain from possession of fireworks and/or other flammable objects, including matches and lighters.
- 11) Use the appropriate bathroom (no boys in girls' room, no girls in boys' room).
- 12) Abide by the Teen Center "hands off" policy. I will not partake in sexual behavior in the Teen Center.
- 13) Be respectful of Town of Jamestown property, no intentional destruction of property, graffiti.
- 14) Be respectful of others property. I will respect other's property (eg. steal, or borrow anything that isn't mine without the owner's permission.
- 15) Clean up after myself and help staff pick up when directed to do so.
- 16) Conduct myself by the highest standards and follow all directions of staff and other adults.
- 17) Report any problems or issues to the staff on duty.
- 18) Respect and adhere to the guidelines of the Teen Center participant handbook.**
- 19) Accept the consequences for inappropriate behavior.**
 - Charges to my "tab" account.
 - Removal from the Teen Center for day.
 - Contact with my parents/guardians.
 - Suspension from the Teen Center for multiple days.
 - Contact with the Jamestown Police Department.
 - Permanent dismissal from the Teen Center and its programs

I have read, understand and pledge to follow these standards of behavior in order to make the Teen Center a safe, fun, and positive environment, for myself and for all members of the Jamestown Teen Center.

Youth Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

**Jamestown Teen Center
Progressive Discipline Procedures**

The progressive discipline procedures*** is divided into two sections, common behavior infractions and criminal activity. The first consequence listed is for first time offenses, the second/third consequence is for on-going and repeated infractions.

1. Inappropriate language: (1) verbal warning (2) tab charge, written notification (3) call home, asked to leave
2. Exceeding 5 times in/ out: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification, asked to leave
3. Inappropriate wardrobe: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification, asked to leave until dressed appropriately
4. Bikes/skateboards in building: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification (3) ask to leave, call home
5. Inappropriate computer use: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification, removal from computer (3) call home, asked to leave
6. In wrong bathroom: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification (3) ask to leave, call home
7. Public Displays of Affection (kissing, sitting on laps, etc): (1) verbal warning (2) written notification (3) ask to leave, call home
8. Not following staff directions: (1) verbal warning (2) written notification, asked to leave (3) call home, multiple day suspension
9. Being disrespectful to staff and others: (1) written notification, asked to leave (2) multiple day suspension, call home
10. Possession of tobacco/ lighters/ fireworks/ etc. (1) written notification, asked to leave (2) call home (3) multiple day suspension

The following are crimes, parents and police department will be notified.

1. Bullying (verbal/cyber/physical)
2. Destruction of property/vandalism
3. Gambling
4. Fighting
5. Possession/under the influence of alcohol/drugs

I have read, understand and pledge to follow these standards of behavior in order to make the Teen Center as safe, fun, and positive environment, for myself and for all members of the Jamestown Teen Center.

Youth Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

***Please note: This is a living document; all behavior infractions and the corresponding consequences are subject to change at the discretion of Teen Center and Recreation Department Staff as necessary. Youth and parent/guardian input regarding the progressive discipline policy and procedures are highly encouraged.