



# Sparks Before & After-School Program

## Family Handbook for Prairie City & Monroe

Camp Fire Heart of Iowa  
5615 Hickman Road  
Des Moines, IA 50310

**Mission:**

*Growing up is hard.  
That's why Camp Fire connects  
young people to the outdoors,  
to others, and to themselves.*

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### Welcome to Camp Fire Heart of Iowa!

This is a program for the Prairie City Monroe Community School district. We have locations at Prairie City Elementary and Monroe Elementary. Our programs serve children Kindergarten-Fifth Grade. Camp Fire focuses on building the foundation needed by all youth and adults, addressing the fundamental needs of self-esteem, decision making, and self-reliance skills in a flexible caring environment. Camp Fire is licensed through the Department of Human Services. Camp Fire Heart of Iowa serves several counties in Central Iowa; Black Hawk, Boone, Dallas, Greene, Jasper, Marion, Madison, Polk, Poweshiek, Story, Tama, and Warren. A variety of programs are offered in these counties, including the club program, before- and after-school, day camp and overnight camp. Camp Fire owns and operates Camp Hantesa, a year-round camp and conference center, south of Boone.

#### **Statement of Inclusion:**

Camp Fire believes in the dignity and the intrinsic worth of every human being. We welcome, affirm, and support young people and adults of all abilities and disabilities, experiences, races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, religion and non-religion, citizenship and immigration status, and any other category people use to define themselves or others. We strive to create safe and inclusive environments that celebrate diversity and foster positive relationships.

#### **Goals:**

1. Enhance the self-development, social development, and skill development of the children
2. Provide a safe and supportive environment which extends and enhances the parental role
3. Meet parents concerns about the safety and development of their child before and after school

#### **Purpose:**

Camp Fire's interest in child care is a natural one. The agency has a long history of responding to the changing needs and families. In addition, child care programs relate to Camp Fires purpose- direct program serviced and advocacy for youth. Camp Fire Heart of Iowa's purpose is to provide program of informal education, opportunities for youth to realize their potential and to function effectively as caring, self directed individuals, responsible to themselves and others; and as an organization Camp Fire seeks to improve those conditions in society which affect youth.

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**Contact Information**

Camp Fire Central Office Information:

Camp Fire Heart of Iowa

5615 Hickman Road

Des Moines IA, 50310

**Phone:** 515-274-1501

**Email:** [Campfire@Campfireiowa.org](mailto:Campfire@Campfireiowa.org)

**Office Hours:** Office hours vary based on program needs. Please call ahead to ensure someone can assist you.

**Website:** [www.campfireiowa.org](http://www.campfireiowa.org)

Center Directors:

Owen Ballard

Development & Operations Director

[oballard@campfireiowa.org](mailto:oballard@campfireiowa.org)

Lauren Slinker

Program Director

[lauren@campfireiowa.org](mailto:lauren@campfireiowa.org)

Program Sites:

| Site:    | Monroe Elementary  | Prairie City Elementary  |
|----------|--|--|
| Address: | 400 North Jasper<br>Monroe, IA 50170                                 | 309 E Plainsmen Road<br>Prairie City, IA 50228                                 |
| Phone:   | TBD  | TBD  |
| Email:   | <a href="mailto:monroe@campfireiowa.org">monroe@campfireiowa.org</a> | <a href="mailto:prairiecity@campfireiowa.org">prairiecity@campfireiowa.org</a> |

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|                        |     |                |
|------------------------|-----|----------------|
| On-Site<br>Supervisor: | TBD | Ashley Beenken |
|------------------------|-----|----------------|

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Hours and Dates of Operation

Before-School Program Hours:

Monday: 6:30am-9:10am\*

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 6:30am-7:40am\*

\*Before-school care concludes when the school begins serving breakfast. Sparks students will then be supervised by district staff until school begins.

After-School Program Hours:

Monday-Friday: 3:15pm-6:00pm

School Day Off Program Hours:

7:00am-6:00pm

School Day Off Dates:

November: 23<sup>rd</sup>

**December:** 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>

**January:** 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>

**March:** 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16, and 17<sup>th</sup>

April: 17<sup>th</sup>

**Holidays:** The program will be CLOSED on the following dates:

**Thanksgiving:** Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

**Memorial Day:** May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Inclement Weather Policy:**

- **School Late Start:** If school is delayed due to temperature, programming will start at the normal time. If the delay is due to transportation concerns or inclement weather the program will be cancelled.
- **School Early Dismissal:** If school is dismissed early due to weather the program will also be closed for the safety of students and staff.
- **School Cancelled:** If school is cancelled, the program will be closed for the safety of students and staff.
- In the event there is inclement weather on a no school day or during breaks requiring closure, families will be notified the night before.
- Tuition reimbursements are not offered for cancelled programming due to inclement weather.

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Daily Schedule

**Before School Schedule:**

**Monday:**

6:30am-8:00am: Arrival and free play

8:00am-9:00am Club Times

9:00am-Clean up and get ready for breakfast

9:10am- Breakfast

**Tuesday-Friday:**

6:30am- 8:00am- Arrival and free play

7:40am- Breakfast

**After School Schedule**

3:05pm-3:20pm- Kids Arrive

3:20pm-3:40pm-Snack and attendance

3:40pm-4:30pm- Outdoor time

4:30pm-5:00pm Homework and reading and quiet time activities

5:00pm-5:30pm- Free play

5:30pm-6:00pm Closing Activities

**School Day Off Schedule:**



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7:00am-8:00am Drop Off and Free play

8:00am-8:15am- Clean up, bathrooms, handwashing

8:15am-8:30am- Morning snack

8:30am-9:30am- Outdoor play

9:30am-10:30am- Activity 1

10:30am-11:30am- Activity 2

11:30am-11:45am- Clean up, bathrooms, handwashing

11:45am-12:15pm- Lunch

12:15pm-12:45pm- Quiet time

12:45pm-2:00pm- Club Times

2:00pm-2:15pm-Snack Time

2:15pm-3:15pm- Activity 3

3:15pm-4:00pm- Outdoor time

4:00pm-6:00pm- Free play, group games, and pick up

**Club Time:** Allows kids to pick a topic they are interested in and engage in specialized specific activities

**Free Play:** Students will be able to choose from an array of activities of their choice

**Outdoor Time:** Weather permitting students will get to play outside on the playground, group games, and other activities

**Homework:** Students will have the opportunity to complete their homework in a quiet environment. Staff will be around to assist children but there will not be one on one tutoring and cannot guarantee all work is completed and correct. It is the child's responsibility to complete and remember their homework.

**Closing Activities:** Are activities that kids can pick up quickly when it is time to leave

### Registration

Children attending Monroe Elementary or Prairie City Elementary in grades K-5<sup>th</sup> may register in Sparks Before- and After-School Program. Registration is first come, first served though families re-enrolling from the previous school year will be given early access before remaining spots are opened to the general public. Camp Fire is required to maintain state-established child-to-adult ratios as a condition of DHS licensure. Therefore, program capacity is not flexible.

If summer program is offered, a separate registration will be required.

Registration is to be completed at [www.campfireiowa.org](http://www.campfireiowa.org). A \$35 registration fee per child is due at the time of registration.

Waitlist:

When programs are at capacity, families may register on the program's waitlist by completing the online registration forms and non-refundable registration fee. When a childcare slot opens, parents will be notified in the order of which they registered. Once contacted parents will have 3 business days to respond and accept the offer of enrollment. If acceptance is not communicated within 3 business days, the next student on the list will be contacted.

Non-Registered Participants:

Camp Fire does not offer drop off services at any sites. Friends or siblings of participants who are not enrolled will not be allowed to attend programming.

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition:

- There is a one-time, non-refundable \$35.00 registration fee per child
- Before and After School Care tuition cost is \$65.00 per week per child
- Program cost remains the same regardless of how many days per week the student attends
- Monthly tuition is due by the 5th of each month. Payments made after the due date will incur a \$20.00 late fee.
- Failure to make payment or payment arrangements by the 10th will result in suspension until payment is received or arrangements have been made.
  - Payment in full, including all past due tuition & any fees incurred, is required to re-enter the program after a student is withdrawn due to non-payment.
  - To re-enroll after a student is withdrawn due to non-payment, there must be space in the program and the non-refundable \$35.00 registration fee will be required again.

### Payment Options:

- Online via ACH/e-check, credit, or debit card at [www.campfireiowa.org](http://www.campfireiowa.org)
  - Convenient installment options offered for auto withdrawal weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly
- Check or money order
  - Payment can be mailed to 5615 Hickman Road, Des Moines, IA 50310
  - Payment must be received by due date to avoid late fee
- Cash
  - Cash payments can be received by appointment only at 5615 Hickman Road, Des Moines, IA 50310
- Payments cannot be accepted at Before and After School Site
- Returned ACH/eCheck or check payments due to insufficient funds will be assessed a \$30 returned check fee. Full replacement payment plus the returned check fee will be due within 5 business days to maintain your student's participation in the program. Replacement payment must be made via credit card or cash. Personal check, including e-check, privileges will be terminated after more than one occurrence of a returned check.

### Change in Registration / Cancellation / Withdrawal:

- Any change in registration must be made in writing to [campfire@campfireiowa.org](mailto:campfire@campfireiowa.org) or by mail to the Camp Fire Office (5615 Hickman Road, Des Moines, IA 50310) at least 14 days in advance of the student's last day in the program.
- Notifying the on-site staff or supervisor is not acceptable withdrawal notification and will not be honored.
- Payment of all tuition is required until proper notification is received, regardless of attendance in the program.
- Students who withdraw from the program may be re-enrolled as space allows. A \$35.00 non-refundable registration fee will be assessed regardless of previous attendance.

### Refund / Credit:

- Refunds will only be considered for students who withdraw from the program with proper notice that have paid in advance of their last agreed upon day.
- In the event of overpayment due to a change in registration status or inadvertent duplicate payment, we can issue a refund or credit to be used for the next payment(s).
- In the event a student is suspended or dismissed from the program, refunds will not be awarded for a pro-rated week but will be issued for the remainder of the program.

### Program Policies and Procedures

#### Arrival and Departure:

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Parents and students need to check in with staff immediately upon arrival and departure. Other than when the child is coming directly from school, a parent or authorized guardian must accompany the child into the program.

**Drop-Off Times:**

Monday: 6:30am-9:10am

Tuesday-Friday: 6:30am-7:40am

**Pick-Up Times:**

3:15pm-6:00pm

**Authorized Pick-Up Policy:**

Registration includes a form that provides parents the opportunity to list the names of persons allowed to pick up their students. To release the child, the pickup person's ID must match the names provided when registering. If you need to add someone new to the pickup list, please reach out to the On-Site Supervisor. Students are not allowed to check themselves out or leave the program unless accompanied by a parent or someone on the authorized pick-up list that is 16 years or older.

**Late Pick-Up Policy:**

Late pick-ups are not permitted. Being picked up late can be upsetting for children and will result in additional fees described below.

**First Late Pick-Up:** Things come up and accidents happen, etc. Therefore, your first infraction will be a written warning that will go on record. No charge will be assessed the first time you are up to 15 minutes late. For every minute after that, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute per child, which must be paid within two working days.

**Second Late Pick-Up:** If your child is picked up after closing a second time, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute per child for every minute that you are late. This charge must be paid within two working days. In addition, a conference may be scheduled with the On-Site Supervisor.

**Third Late Pick-Up:** If your child is picked up after closing a third time, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute per child for every minute that you are late. This charge must be paid within two working days. A conference will be scheduled with the On-Site Supervisor and Center Director. Dismissal from the program may be discussed.

The above policy will also be enforced for early drop-offs.

Failure to pay late pick-up fees may also result in the student's suspension or dismissal from the program.

If the staff have not received a phone call from a parent by closing time, staff will attempt to contact you or someone on the emergency contact list. If no one can be reached and your child hasn't been picked up within 30 minutes, staff must contact the local police.

### **Absences Reporting:**

When you know that your child will be absent, please call or email the On-Site Supervisor before the scheduled program time. Please remember to notify the On-Site Supervisor in the following situations:

- Your child is ill and will not attend school or left school early due to illness.
- Your child left school for an appointment.
- You, or someone else, will be picking up your child from school instead of attending afternoon program.
- Your child is riding the bus home instead of attending afternoon program.

Attendance is most important for after-school care. If a child does not report to the program right after school and the parent has not notified the On-Site Supervisor of their absence, a staff member will try to locate the child by checking with their classroom teacher, the office, and then call the parent. If program staff cannot reach the parent, they will contact emergency contacts and/or emergency services.

### **Custody/Visitation Agreement:**

It important to communicate with the On-Site Supervisor regarding custody/visitation issues. For the safety of the children, a written copy of the custody/visitation agreement **MUST** be acquired by the On-Site Supervisor if the agreement affects your child's release from the center. Legally, Camp Fire staff cannot hold children from the biological or adoptive parent(s) if there is not a court order specifying otherwise on file. Staff as well as the local police department will follow the court order regarding release of the child.

### **Unlimited Access:**

Parents shall be afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during the center's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of a provider unless parental contact is prohibited by court order.

### **Persons Without Authorized Access:**

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, subcontracted staff or volunteer shall not have "unrestricted access" to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian, nor may they be counted in the staff to child ratio. \*

**\*Unrestricted access** means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for childcare. All persons approved to be involved with child care shall have had a

record check before being allowed access. People that have not had a record check and been cleared to work with children may not assume child care responsibilities or be alone with children.

Persons who have not been approved for unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the teacher unless he/she delegates it to the teacher assistant due to a conflict of interest with the person. Supervision means to be in charge of an individual engaged with children in an activity or task and ensure that they perform it correctly; Monitoring means to be in charge of ensuring proper conduct of others.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center that is not an owner, staff member, substitute, subcontracted staff or volunteer, parent, guardian, or custodian of a child enrolled in the facility to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason they will contact their site manager or another management staff to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation staff will follow the "intruder in the center procedures". Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa code 692A) shall not operate, manage, be employed by or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center. They shall not be on the property of the child care center without written permission of the center director except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offenders own minor child or ward to and from the center.

The center director is not obligated to provide written permission and must consult with the licensing consult before providing this permission. If written permission is granted it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present including: the precise location in the center where the sex offender may be present, the reason for the sex offenders presence at the facility, the duration for the sex offender's presence, and a description of how the center staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure the sex offender is not left alone with a child. This written permission must be signed and dated by the director and the sex offender and be kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with employees of the before- and after-school program, to care for students most appropriately and safely. Students' files will remain in a secure and locked place.

**Non-Center Activity Policy:**

If a child is participating in an extra-curricular activity in the school building during programming hours, parents must complete the non-center activity form. Please talk with the site supervisor to get the form. Activities include, tutoring, helping a teacher after school, or any clubs. Children are not allowed to leave the program without the form or being signed out by an authorized pick-up person.

**Packing List:**

Children should come to Sparks appropriately dressed for outdoor activity. This includes:

- Hats, mittens, snow pants and boots in the winter. We are unable to keep individual children inside when the group is going out to play. Therefore, it is crucial to send appropriate outdoor clothing.
- Closed-toed shoes should be worn. Tennis shoes are preferable.
- Jackets and/or sweatshirts are important to have in the spring and summer. While it may be quite warm during the school day, it can be chilly by the time we go outside for recess.
- To minimize any mix-up or loss of clothing, label all of your child's clothes, boots, coats, hats, sweaters, gloves, etc.
- It is a good idea to send an extra set of clothing in your child's backpack. There are several ways in which your child can become wet or messy enough to need a change of clothes.

**Personal Items:**

We ask that children keep their personal belongings, including toys, money, valuables, video games, other electronics, candy or gum, at home. Camp Fire is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Cell Phones - Sparks participants are discouraged from bringing cell phones. Telephones are available and staff members will assist in making all necessary calls. Camp Fire is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones. Cell phone use during Sparks may result in confiscation of the phone, in which the cell phone will be returned to the child when the parent picks up.

**Field Trips:**

Field trips will occasionally be planned for school day off program day. Parents will be notified of field trips by newsletters and emails. When enrolling parents will need to fill out the field trip participation form in order to attend field trips. Families who choose not to participate in field trips should plan for alternate care on the days of field trips. Sparks will utilize Camp Fire or District busses and drivers as available for off-site trips.

### **Meals and Snacks:**

Camp Fire does not provide meals for participants, however, breakfast is available (provided by the school) on normal school days. During no school days, families should send children with a sack lunch and have children eat breakfast before arriving and/or send them with a sack breakfast as well.

Camp Fire provides nutritious snacks for all program participants. During regular school days, an afternoon snack will be provided. During no school days, a morning and afternoon snack will be provided.

Camp Fire will provide alternative snacks for students with dietary restrictions (allergy, medical, religious, preferential, etc.) so long as those restrictions are noted in the student's medical form during registration. Snack menus will be posted at the site and included in regular newsletters.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Parents and designated pick-up persons are expected to be respectful to staff and children. Matters that are not resolved by on-site program staff should be addressed to the Center Director.

Shouting and profanity are not permitted. Persons that engage in these behaviors will be asked to leave and these actions may result in the dismissal of the child(ren) from the program.

### **Staff Selection and Training:**

All staff are trained to maintain a 1 adult to 15 child ratios, pass state and federal background checks, complete Mandatory Reporter Training, Essentials training, Universal Precautions, First Aid and CPR, and other additional trainings that will provide them with the skills to provide high quality care to your children.

All staff with Camp Fire working directly with students are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse/or neglect. Employees are required to report any suspicion of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect within 24 hours when in the course of working with a student.



### Discipline Policies:

Camp Fire is interested in the welfare of all participants. Participants in Camp Fire programs are expected to follow the rules of the program and the direction of the staff. A participant's failure or inability to follow rules or staff directions may result in disciplinary action.

**The Mustang Way** is expected from all students and staff: Being **responsible, respectful, safe, and kind** is what is taught and reinforced across all settings of the school and expected of students outside of school as productive citizens within their communities.

Disciplinary action may be called for when a participant disrupts program by requiring constant one-on-one attention; inflicts physical or emotional harm on others; abuses staff or is otherwise unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the Camp Fire program.

When disciplinary action is called for, staff will notify the parents/caregivers of the situation and discuss a solution. If improvement does not occur, the following steps will be taken:

**Camp Fire reserves the right to accelerate the disciplinary process as it sees fit and based on the severity of the incident.** Parents/caregivers will be notified any time a child is exhibiting behavior that endangers themselves or others and may be sent home immediately.

- **First incident:** Parent/caregiver will be informed of incident by phone or at pick up.
- **Second incident:** Parent/caregiver will be called and informed that the participant has been suspended for the rest of the day. Parent/caregiver should make arrangements for the participant to be picked up as soon as possible.
- **Third incident:** Parent/caregiver will be called and informed that the participant has been suspended from program for the rest of the week. Parent/guardian should make arrangements for the participant to be picked up as soon as possible.
- **Fourth incident:** Parent/caregiver will be called and informed that the participant has been suspended from program for the remainder of the school year. Parent/guardian should make arrangements for the participant to be picked up as soon as possible.
- Registration fees will not be reimbursed for the remainder of a week following a participant's suspension.
- If a participant is suspended for the remainder of the year, they will not be expected to pay any registration fees for weeks they will be unable to attend.

## **Biting**

If a student leaves a mark on another child in result of biting or other injury, staff will notify both parents/guardians as soon as the situation is under control. A behavior and incident report will be completed, a copy will be filled in the student's file and a copy given to parents at the time of pickup. The following first aid procedures will be followed:

- **Surface Bite:** ice will be applied to reduce swelling and bruising
- **For a Bite That Breaks the Skin:** the area will be cleaned with soap and water. The bite mark will be bandaged and iced and will be applied to reduce swelling/bruising and the student will be monitored

## **Health & Safety Policies:**

Parents are responsible for informing Camp Fire staff of any special needs, concerns, or information on their child's health.

### **Illness:**

If your child becomes ill while at Camp Fire, you will be called to pick up your child as soon as possible. Students are not allowed to return to school or Camp Fire until they have been 24 hours free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea prior to returning to school and Camp Fire programs. When a child is sick it is generally expected for parents to pick up within an hour of notification.

### **Accidents, Injuries, and Medical Emergencies:**

In the event of a medical emergency or regular injury/accident, program staff will provide first aid and care will be documented. An ill or injured child will be turned over to the care of the parents or qualified medical personnel as quickly as possible.

We encourage children to communicate with staff if they have had an accident or have become injured. Staff members will notify parents at pick up with an accident report.

If a student is involved in an injury or accident regarding their head, parents will be notified immediately, and incident will be documented.

If it is determined that further medical help is needed, Camp Fire will attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If they cannot be reached, Camp Fire will contact begin reaching out to emergency contacts. If emergency medical care is needed immediately, Camp Fire staff will call 911. Camp Fire staff are not authorized to transport children themselves to receive medical treatment under any circumstances.

### **Medication:**

If a child requires medication during programming hours, the On-Site Supervisor (or other authorized staff) will administer medicine. Parents must communicate this need with the On-Site Supervisor and fill out additional paperwork including an authorization form.

Prescriptions must be brought in the original packaging and include the child's name, name of the medicine, dosage, frequency, instructions, and prescribing professional. Only include the amount of medicine that is needed for the child to get through the week.

Over-the-counter medications are subject to the same procedures as prescription medications. All medication will remain in locked container out of reach of children.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

If a child has a communicable disease, we ask that parents share this information with the Center Director so they can inform other parents via email in the program. Postings will only include information on the diseases and the child's information will remain confidential.

### **Special Needs:**

Please inform staff of your child's special needs or limitations. You can contact your site director with any questions. We want to provide the best possible care for all children.

### **Heat and Cold:**

Each location has the Child Care Weather Watch chart posted for staff to utilize. This chart was developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health, Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine the heat and wind chill index. Staff will follow the guidelines of this chart to ensure the safety of the children in the program. A copy of the heat and wind chill index chart can be printed from the following website, <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/Files/HCCI/weatherwatch.pdf>

### **Emergency Plans:**

Camp Fire will follow the Prairie City Monroe Community School District Emergency Operation Plan in crisis situations (suicide, deaths, student walk-out, bomb threat, etc). All staff members are to follow the steps of the plan and, above all, protect the safety of students and others.

Additionally, each school site has established fire, intruder, tornado, and evacuation plans which Camp Fire will adhere to as a program taking place in the district's facilities.