

P.A.R.K.

Parent Handbook

2013-2014



2013-2014 P.A.R.K. Programmed After-school Recreation for Kids

Welcome to P.A.R.K. (Programmed After-school Recreation for Kids). The City of Grove City Parks & Recreation Department is pleased to provide this school age childcare program for your family. We are very excited to offer a fun, safe and enriching program for children during those difficult hours between school dismissal and your return from work. **Our program operates from the time school dismisses until 6 p.m. everyday school is in session.**

This handbook has been prepared for your convenience to inform you of our policies and procedures and to answer many of the questions you might have about our program. We have also enclosed the *Parent Agreement Form* and the *Walking Field Trip Permission Slip Form* that need to be signed by a parent or guardian, and returned to the P.A.R.K. program as soon as possible. We ask that you keep this handbook in a convenient place. **You are responsible for reading and understanding the information in this handbook.**

It is the goal of the Grove City Parks & Recreation Department to have the program run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. With your participation and cooperation, it will continue to be a quality childcare program.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments please call (614) 277-3050.

Sincerely,

Megan Williams & Amanda Gehres

Megan Williams &
Amanda Gehres
Recreation Coordinators
P.A.R.K. Program

P.A.R.K. Sites

All sites will have cellular phones. One leader will wear the cell phone at all times during P.A.R.K. hours from 2:30-6 p.m. This is your way of contacting the staff at that site or leaving a message during non-staffed hours. Cellular phones will be turned on only during P.A.R.K. hours.

J.C. Sommer

3055 Kingston Ave.
801-8350
P.A.R.K. Cell #: 571-9620

Monterey

2548 Dennis Ave.
801-8250
P.A.R.K. Cell #: 571-9622

Buckeye Woods

2525 Holton Rd.
801-8025
P.A.R.K. Cell #: 519-4664

Highland Park

2600 Cameron
801-8200
P.A.R.K. Cell #: 571-9624

Richard Ave.

2646 Richard Ave.
801-8325
P.A.R.K. Cell #: 571-9623

I. P.A.R.K. Philosophy

The P.A.R.K. program is not intended to be an extension of school. We feel that after a long day of highly structured schoolwork, children need an opportunity to choose from a variety of activities that are planned to be fun, enriching, and at the same time allow for spontaneity.

The program is developed in an attempt to take into consideration the fact that our children are of different developmental stages. The activities we choose will be as easy or as complicated as the person participating can allow. Although our basic program will be structured in a larger sense, it will allow the children to make choices within that structure. We hope to teach each child to make intelligent and responsible decisions concerning allocation of their time that will continue after they leave our program.

II. P.A.R.K. Program Goal

The goals of our program are to provide a safe, secure, enriching and affordable place to be after school. Other goals include (but are not limited to):

- Encourage development of self-esteem by providing a place where children can learn about themselves, build self worth and experience success.
- Promote relationships between participants that help to form friendships.
- Encourage independence and good choice making skills.
- Promote good communication skills.
- Stress cooperation.
- Develop active listening skills.
- Foster a healthy respect for diversity.
- To provide an informal, peaceful, community-oriented environment where children can experience different activities that help them learn about themselves.

III. Parental Participation and Involvement

The parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the P.A.R.K. program shall be permitted unlimited access to the program during the operating hours for the purposes of contacting the child, evaluating the premises or the care provided. Upon entering the premises the parent or guardian should notify the P.A.R.K. staff of his/her presence.

Parent concerns, opinions and suggestions are always welcome. Parents who need assistance with concerns or questions about the program may contact the P.A.R.K. program leaders, Recreation Coordinator or the City of Grove City Parks & Recreation office.

Conferences with leaders or the recreation coordinators will be available upon request of the parent.

IV. Program Policies and Procedures

A. Enrollment

Only those children enrolled in a South-Western City Elementary and Intermediate School located within the city limits of Grove City or those children enrolled in Kindergarten through 4th grade at any private school located in the city limits of Grove City will be eligible to participate in the program. Enrollment will be on a first-come, first-served basis. It is unlawful for the program to discriminate against the enrollment of children on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

B. Registration

Registration must be completed prior to your child attending the program. Registration will not be accepted at the P.A.R.K. sites. Transactions must take place through the City of Grove City Parks & Recreation office at City Hall, 4035 Broadway. A \$30 non-refundable registration fee must accompany each registration.

C. Tuition Payments

1. The tuition fee for the 2013-14 school year is \$182 per child per month (regardless of how many weeks are in that month). Tuition is \$92 per child per month for children enrolled in Kindergarten. August and June are not included in the payment schedule.
2. The P.A.R.K. program will provide you with Tuition Payment Slips and you will have until the tuition payment deadline to pay.
3. All tuition payments are due on the 15th of the month for the following month. (If the 15th of the month falls on a weekend, the tuition will be due on the first business day following the 15th). **Tuition payments must be accompanied by a tuition coupon slip and are due by:**

Aug. 15	for August/September
Sept. 16	for October
Oct. 15	for November
Nov. 15	for December
Dec. 16	for January
Jan. 15	for February
Feb. 18	for March
Mar. 17	for April
Apr. 15	for May/June

4. Once a child is enrolled in the program, his/her spot is held until the tuition payment deadline as indicated above. **Any payment not received by the due date may result in your child being dropped from the program.** A non-refundable registration fee of \$30 will be required to re-enroll your child.

Registration of children on the waiting list(s) will begin on the day following the tuition due date.

5. Tuition is to be paid in one of the following ways:
 - a. By mail (4035 Broadway, Grove City, OH, 43123).
 - b. In person at the City of Grove City Parks & Recreation office in City Hall (4035 Broadway) between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
 - c. By credit card (by phone 277-3050, fax 277-3090 or in person).
 - d. In the drop box behind City Hall after hours (24 hours, 7 days per week).
6. Make checks payable to: **City of Grove City**.
7. If a check is returned due to insufficient funds there will be a \$25 processing fee in addition to the amount of the check. If a check is returned a second time, all future payments must be made by cash or money order.
8. Reimbursements will not be made for absences, school holidays, or inclement weather days.
9. Tuition for the P.A.R.K. program is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please remember to keep your receipts. If you pay by mail a receipt will be sent to you. Our tax identification number is 31-6400-527.
10. A written notice is required if you need to withdraw your child. Refunds will only be issued if you withdraw your child prior to the month starting. Once the month has started full or pro-rated refunds will not be issued.

D. Attendance

Attendance will be taken each day for safety and security.

If your child is ill and will not be at the program or if you will be picking up your child early, it is your responsibility to call the voice mailbox of your particular site before 2:15 p.m. and leave a message informing the P.A.R.K. staff of the absence. **If you fail to report your child's absence on the P.A.R.K. voicemail, the Recreation Coordinator will assess a tracking fee of \$20 on each occurrence.** Cell phone numbers for each site are as follows:

Buckeye Woods	519-4664
J.C. Sommer	571-9620
Monterey	571-9622
Richard Ave.	571-9623
Highland Park	571-9624

To leave a voicemail message for the P.A.R.K. Recreation Coordinators, call 539-0582 or 539-0350.

E. Child Tracking Procedure

When a child does not arrive for P.A.R.K. on any given day and we have not received a note or phone call informing us of his/her absence, the following steps will be followed for locating the child:

1. A P.A.R.K. leader will call the site's voicemail to see if the parent called in and reported the absence.
2. A leader will check the school office to find out if the child was absent from or signed out of school that day.
3. If the child is still not accounted for and a message has not been left by the parent, the leader will contact the parent(s) and if necessary, the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Medical Form, to confirm the child's absence from the program. At that time, the Recreation Coordinator may assess a \$20 tracking fee.

F. End-of-Day Closing

Our program closes at 6 p.m. It is your responsibility to make every effort to pick up your child(ren) by the closing time. Both the P.A.R.K. staff and the schools have other commitments after this time. Please respect the P.A.R.K. staff in this matter.

Late pick up will be subject to the following:

1. **The Recreation Coordinator will assess a late fee of \$10 for any part of the first 15 minutes after 6 p.m. and \$1 for each additional minute after 6:15 p.m.**
2. Picking up a child after 6 p.m. for the third time may result in dismissal from the program. This rule will be strictly enforced.
3. The clock on the P.A.R.K. cell phone will be the final authority for any time discrepancies.

Please remember that picking up your child late is an UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION FOR EVERYONE.

- Your child is very aware that every other child has gone home already.
- You are most likely feeling stressed and rushed.
- P.A.R.K. staff that must stay late may be feeling stressed or rushed since we all have somewhere to be after work.

G. Sign Out

1. Persons picking up the child(ren) must enter the building and inform the leader that the child is leaving.
2. Each child must be signed out when picked up at the end of the day. A child may not sign him/herself out. Parent or guardian initials are sufficient. Persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least 18 years of age.
3. No child will exit the program alone or with any unauthorized person.
4. The leader must be notified in writing ahead of time if someone other than the person(s) listed on the Emergency Medical Form will pick up your child.

5. The Recreation Coordinator must be notified in writing if there is a specific person who should not pick up your child. Please remember that P.A.R.K. cannot deny non-custodial parent access to the child. Under the laws of the state of Ohio, both parents may have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent, who chooses not to include the child's other parent on the Emergency Medical Form, must file an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, divorce decree stating sole custody). Absent that document, the P.A.R.K. program may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

H. Early Dismissal and Inclement Weather Days

1. P.A.R.K. operates only on the days school is in session. P.A.R.K. will not be held on scheduled holidays. On the days school is closed for any reason, including inclement weather, the P.A.R.K. program is also closed.
2. P.A.R.K. will operate on the planned early dismissal days (teacher in-service meetings) that have been published on the school district's annual master calendar. On days when school is dismissed early for teacher's meeting then we will have P.A.R.K. These days have been pre-planned and the program can accommodate this schedule change.
3. P.A.R.K. will not be held on inclement weather days. P.A.R.K. does not issue refunds for calamity days
4. P.A.R.K. will not be held if schools are closed 30 minutes prior to their regular dismissal time because of an emergency situation. If school is dismissed early in the day (30 minutes before the end of the school day) because of incoming severe weather, or for any other type of emergency, the P.A.R.K. program will be closed. You should have alternate care arrangements made for your child. Please have these arrangements made ahead of time with the administration of the school your child attends. P.A.R.K. is not responsible for children when school is cancelled unexpectedly.

I. Snack

1. All children are to bring their own snack and drinks from home. (Soft drinks and lollipops are not permitted during the program).
2. Since we do have a set daily snack time all children must bring a snack.
3. All children are required to sit with the group during snack time.
4. We ask that you and your child please avoid sugary foods for snack. Suggested snack foods include: peanut butter & jelly, raw vegetables & dip, fruit, granola, lunch meats & cheeses, crackers, pretzels, raisins, yogurt, mini bagels, and dried fruit.

5. Snack should be nutritious and encompass at least two food groups. Ohio Department of Education and Department of Job and Family Services guidelines require nutritious snacks.
6. To avoid the spread of germs, children may not share opened food or utensils

J. P.A.R.K. Activities

P.A.R.K. leaders will be ready to greet the children at 2:40 p.m. Children will eat snack and then get ready to go outside. The program will go outside each afternoon, weather permitting, for at least 30 minutes. In colder weather, outside time will be brief. (Most school systems use 20 degrees F or above for outdoor recess). The children will then return to the program’s activity area and participate in large group and small group activities until their parent’s arrival. A monthly calendar of activities will be handed out each month. This calendar will highlight the planned activities but is not an inclusive list.

The following is a sample daily schedule of activities, but please remember that staff at each site is encouraged to creatively set the daily schedule with the children.

2:30 p.m.-2:45 p.m.	Transition from school classroom to P.A.R.K.
2:45 p.m.-3 p.m.	Attendance and Snack
3 p.m.-3:15 p.m.	Schedule of Daily Activities
3:15 p.m.-4 p.m.	Outside time, large muscle activities, group games
4 p.m.-5 p.m.	Activity stations, individual and group activities
5 p.m.-6 p.m.	Structured free time, departures begin

K. Clothing and Personal Belongings

Send your child dressed appropriately and comfortably. Be ready for warm/cold, rain/shine! In colder weather children should have a warm coat, head covering and gloves. If your child brings personal belongings to the program he/she must be responsible for those items. The City of Grove City Parks & Recreation will not be responsible for any damaged or lost items.

L. After-school School Activities

If a child wants to participate in an after-school activity such as safety patrol (outside of the P.A.R.K. program), he/she must have a signed permission slip from the parent/guardian (permanently on file).

M. Medication Administration

The P.A.R.K. program has a strict policy against administering any type of medication that is not prescribed by a physician. We will administer only personal prescriptions filled by a pharmacist with a label bearing the child’s name and directions for administration. The parent must complete the proper authorization forms and must give the medication to the P.A.R.K. Leaders.

N. Electronic Media Policy

Electronic game devices including, but not limited to, Nintendo DS, Gameboy Advance, PSP and other expensive electronic devices such as cell phones and MP3 players are not permitted at the P.A.R.K. program. Also, television and video watching during any Grove City Parks and Recreation program is not permitted. Program philosophy dictates that activity choices for program participants shall be creative, active and imaginative and provide enriching programming in a safe, fun environment. The only exception to this policy may be a planned movie field trip away from the site.

V. Behavior Management Policy

The P.A.R.K. behavior management policy was established with the knowledge that children need clear limits, set in ways that do not negatively influence their self-esteem. Limits are set to protect each child from hurting himself/herself, others, the equipment or facilities. The leaders set guidelines and use various techniques for group management. The goal is for each child to become a problem-solver and conflict-resolver.

Our P.A.R.K. environment is designed to promote success, allowing for much freedom within the limits. Children need to explore the limits of each setting. Just as your children test you, they will probably test us sometime during the year, to define our personal and P.A.R.K. site limits. When children do test the limits we allow the child several chances to change the behavior...

- a. Behavior problems will be managed through conflict resolution techniques, such as, leader/child discussion, redirection, choices, removal from the situation, loss of privileges, and in severe situations dismissal from the program.
- b. Behavior will be managed according to the following steps.
 1. There will be a Leader/Child conference
 - Verbal
 - Redirect Child's actions
 - Choices
 - Offer solution
 - Removal from the problem situation

If the behavior is consistent, habitual, or a severe inappropriate action:

2. There will be a Leader/Parent conference
3. Leader/Parent/Coordinator conference

A child at the final step may have appropriate consequences established such as loss of privileges, suspension or dismissal from the program. Severe behavior problems could result in immediate dismissal from the program. If a child cannot adjust to the program setting and behave appropriately, the parent or guardian may be asked to find alternate care.

Behavior management is the slow process of helping a child see the sense and experience the success of acting a certain way. Behavior management helps children develop self-control and respect for themselves, other people and the community. Managing behavior should never harm, shame or frighten a child. All employees are required to treat children with respect, and use discipline as a learning opportunity.

VI. Field Trips

A. Walking Field Trips

On occasion, the children may take a short walk to a neighborhood location such as the library or park. A sign will be posted indicating time of departure and return, where the children are going and what route they are using. You will be advised of the trip ahead of time. Please sign the Walking Permission Slip enclosed and submit it to the P.A.R.K. staff.

VII. Emergencies and Safety Policies

- A. Emergency Medical Forms must be filled out completely by the parent or guardian before the first day of the program. These are kept on site.
- B. All children need to have at least two emergency contacts written on their Emergency Medical Forms. These people should be no more than one-half hour away from the site.**
- C. Action for emergencies will follow the procedures as stated on the Emergency Medical Forms.
- D. If a medical condition is listed on the Emergency Medical Form, a *Child Medical/Physical Care Plan Form* must be filled out to inform and train the P.A.R.K. leaders of all necessary instructions to properly care for your child.
- E. Children will be transported to the source of emergency medical or dental care by parent or guardian or by medical providers only depending on the seriousness of the accident.
- F. Additional Safety Policies
 - 1. No child is to be left unattended or unsupervised. Children may use the restroom or get a drink with the leaders' permission unsupervised if the entire group within the program resides indoors. If the entire group within the program is outdoors/playground, there will be group restroom breaks supervised by a P.A.R.K. leader.
 - 2. The staff has immediate access to a working telephone at all times. Each site has a department issued cell phone that one staff member will have on or near them at all times.
 - 3. Fire drills are held randomly on a monthly basis. Tornado drills are also discussed.
 - 4. The Parks and Recreation Department and staff are required to immediately notify the local public children services agency when they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
 - 5. An injury report is completed and filed when injuries occur. You will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy of the report.
 - 6. During colder weather children will be expected to be dressed appropriately for outside play. They will be expected to bring a warm coat, a head covering, gloves and other clothing as deemed appropriate.

VIII. Communicable Disease

The staff is required to complete a six-hour training in the Recognition and Treatment of Communicable Diseases.

The staff, upon entering the program, will observe all children. Children exhibiting the following symptoms or who develop these symptoms at the program will be discharged from the program and not permitted to return until 24 hours after these symptoms are no longer present:

- Diarrhea (3 or more abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period).
- Severe coughing causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching of the eyes.
- Temperature of at least 100 degrees F when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness. Temperature shall be taken axillary method with a digital thermometer.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
- Unusual dark urine or grey or white stool.
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Vomiting, more than one time when accompanied by another sign or symptom of illness.
- Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation.

Any child exhibiting the above symptoms will be isolated from the rest of the group (within sight of the leaders), provided with a cot and observed carefully. The parent/guardian will be called immediately to pick up the child within 30 minutes.

A sign will be posted at the school informing parents of exposure to a communicable disease. A Communicable Disease Chart is also posted at each site.

B. Mild Illness

A child who is only mildly ill (i.e. stomachache or headache) will be allowed to attend. He/she will be observed. At the discretion of the leaders, you may be called and informed of the child's complaints and the decision to pick up your child will be up to you.

The P.A.R.K. program follows licensing guidelines set forth by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. The guidelines are available on request from the Recreation Coordinator.

Please sign the following form and return the white copy to the P.A.R.K. program
Parent Agreement

A Parent Handbook, which contains information on the P.A.R.K. program policies and procedures, has been given to me/us. I/we agree to read the Parent Handbook. I/we agree to abide by the requirements listed below as well as all the policies and procedures set forth in the Parent Handbook. In return the P.A.R.K. program agrees to provide care for my/our child(ren), which meets the philosophy and goals of the program.

I/We, the parents of _____, agree to:

1. Enroll my/our child(ren) in the P.A.R.K. program by registering at the City of Grove City Parks and Recreation office located in City Hall and paying the \$30 registration fee.
2. Complete all forms necessary before my/our child(ren) can attend the program.
3. Make tuition payments according to the tuition payment deadlines established by the City of Grove City Parks and Recreation Department.
4. Give advance notice in writing, in the event I/we chose to withdraw our child from the program.
5. Pay one month of tuition in the event I/we choose to withdraw my/our child(ren) from the program if I/we did not notify the program in advance.
6. Make regular payments according to the tuition payment schedule.
7. Pay a \$25 processing fee for any returned check. If a check is returned a second time, I/we will make further payments by cash or money order.
8. Sign our child(ren) in for the morning program and out for the afternoon program on the daily attendance sheet.
9. Agree to pick up my/our child(ren) at the program site no later than 6 p.m. I/we understand that a fee of \$10 for any part of the first 15 minutes after 6 p.m. and \$1 per minute past 6:15 p.m. will be charged to my/our account by the Recreation Coordinator. In the event of three late pick-ups, my/our child(ren) may be dismissed from the program.
10. Agree to inform the P.A.R.K. leaders of the days that my/our child (ren) will not be in attendance, no matter what the reason for the absence. I/we understand that if advanced notification of my/our child's absence is not given to the P.A.R.K. leaders, a tracking fee of \$20 will be charged to my/our account by the Recreation Coordinators.
11. Notify the P.A.R.K. leaders and City of Grove City Parks and Recreation office of any changes in my/our registration information (e.g. address, phone numbers, place of employment, etc.).

I/We understand that:

1. The registration fee is non-refundable.
2. I/We will be asked to withdraw our child(ren) in the event my/our tuition payments are not on time according to the tuition schedule.
3. I/We will be asked to pay the registration fee to re-enroll our child (ren) in the program if I/we fail to meet the tuition payment due dates.
4. I/We will not be eligible for any tuition refunds once the month has begun.
5. I/We will be asked to attend a conference with the staff in the event of a serious behavior problem with my/our child(ren).
6. I/We may be asked to provide input, in person or in writing, which will help the staff know and serve my/our child(ren) better.
7. A parent roster listing names and phone numbers of P.A.R.K. families participating in the program will be distributed. My/Our name will be included in this roster unless I/we inform the Recreation Coordinators of my objection in writing.
8. Photographs or videos of the children participating in the P.A.R.K. program may be taken periodically and may appear in the newspaper, website or other publications unless I/we inform the Recreation Coordinators of my/our objections in writing.

Date

Parent Signature

Parent Signature

Walking Field Trip Permission Slip

My child _____ has my permission to accompany the P.A.R.K. program on any field trip within walking distance where the program is being held. I understand that this consent applies to walking trips only and that I will be informed ahead of time.

Parent Signature

Date