

GROVE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION
Programmed **A**fter-school
Recreation for **K**ids!

2019-2020
P.A.R.K.
PARENT
HANDBOOK



GROVE CITY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
614-277-3050 • 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, OH 43123 • GroveCityOhio.gov
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LOCATION INFORMATION

OFFICE

Grove City Parks and Recreation

- Office/Mail: 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, OH 43123
- After-hours Drop Box: 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, OH 43123
- Phone: 614-277-3050
- Fax: 614-277-3090 (Allow 24 hours)
- Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

P.A.R.K. SITES

- Hours of Operation: 2:30 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Contact: All sites have cell phones with one leader wearing the phone at all times during P.A.R.K. hours. This is your way of contacting the staff at that site or leaving a message during non-staffed hours. Cell phones are turned on only during P.A.R.K. hours, but messages can be left at any time.

Bolton Crossing Elementary School

- 2695 Holt Road
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-981-0779

Buckeye Woods Elementary School

- 2525 Holton Road
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-519-4664

Highland Park Elementary School

- 2600 Cameron St.
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-571-9624

J.C. Sommer Elementary School

- 3055 Kingston Ave.
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-571-9620

Monterey Elementary School

- 3811 Hoover Road
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-571-9622

Richard Avenue Elementary School

- 3646 Richard Ave.
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-571-9623



Dear Parents:

Welcome to P.A.R.K. (Programmed After-school Recreation for Kids). The City of Grove City Parks and 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. every day school is in session.**

This handbook was 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 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 and Recreation Department for the program to 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 the Parks and Recreation Department at 614-277-3050.

Sincerely,

Megan Williams

Amanda Gehres

Megan Williams

Amanda Gehres

Recreation Supervisors

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 and enriching while at the same time allowing for spontaneity.

The program is developed while considering that our children represent different developmental stages. The activities we choose are as easy or as complicated as the abilities of the person participating allow. Although our basic program has an overarching structure, it allows the children to make choices within that structure. We hope to teach each child to make intelligent and responsible decisions concerning allocation of his/her time that will continue after he/she leaves our program.

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 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.
- Provide an informal, peaceful, community-oriented environment where children can experience different activities that help them learn about themselves.

Parental Participation and Involvement

The parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the P.A.R.K. program is permitted unlimited access to the program during the operating hours for the purposes of contacting the child, or 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. If a special circumstance is in place related to a parent, such as a restraining order, please advise staff.

Parental 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 supervisors or the City of Grove City Parks & Recreation office.

Conferences with leaders or the recreation supervisors are available upon request of the parent.

P.A.R.K. Program Policies and Procedures

I. Enrollment

1. Enrollment Restrictions

Only those children enrolled in a South-Western City School District Elementary School located within the city limits of Grove City or those children enrolled in kindergarten through fourth grade at any private school located within the city limits of Grove City are eligible to participate in the program. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis with a priority registration period available for returning participants.

2. Registration

Registration must be completed prior to your child attending the program. **Registration is not accepted at the P.A.R.K. sites.** Transactions must take place through the Grove City Parks and Recreation Office in the Kingston Center, 3226 Kingston Ave. A \$30 non-refundable registration fee must accompany each registration.

3. Enrollment Policy

It is unlawful for the program to discriminate in enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It may be, however, necessary to produce documentation so we may verify the child's age or current status in school. Once a child is enrolled in the P.A.R.K. program, his/her place is held until the tuition payment deadline.

II. Tuition

1. Tuition Payments

- a. The tuition fee for the 2019-2020 school year is \$187 per child per month, regardless of the number of weeks or school off-days in that month.
- b. The P.A.R.K. program provides you with Tuition Payment Slips. You have until the tuition payment deadline to pay.
- c. All tuition is to be paid per the tuition schedule in one of the following ways:
 - (1) By mail to Grove City Parks and Recreation 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, Ohio 43123.
 - (2) In person at the Grove City Parks and Recreation office in the Kingston Center, 3226 Kingston Ave., between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
 - (3) By credit card: call 614-277-3050 or stop in the office. Pay by fax to 614-277-3090; allow 24 hours for receipt.
 - (4) In the drop box at the Kingston Center after hours, seven days per week.
- d. Make checks payable to: **City of Grove City.**
- e. If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, a \$25 processing fee is due 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.

- f. Reimbursements are not made for child absences, vacations, school holidays or inclement weather days.
- g. All tuition payments are due on the 15th of the month for the following month. If the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday, the tuition is due the next business day. **Tuition payments must be accompanied by a tuition coupon slip and are due by:**
 - (1) Thursday, Aug. 15 for August/September
 - (2) Monday, Sept. 16 for October
 - (3) Tuesday, Oct. 15 for November
 - (4) Friday, Nov. 15 for December
 - (5) Monday, Dec. 16 for January
 - (6) Wednesday, Jan. 15 for February
 - (7) Tuesday, Feb. 18 for March
 - (8) Monday, March 16 for April
 - (9) Wednesday, April 15 for May/June
- h. 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 is required to re-enroll your child. Registration of children on the waiting list(s) begins the day following the tuition due date.
- i. 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 is sent to you. Our tax identification number is 31-6400-527.
- j. 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.

III. Attendance

- 1. Attendance is taken daily for safety and security.

If your child is ill and will not be at the program or if you will pick up your child early, it is your responsibility to call the voicemail 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 supervisor will assess a tracking fee of \$20 on each occurrence.

Cell phone numbers for each site are as follows:

- Bolton Crossing 614-981-0779
- Buckeye Woods 614-519-4664
- Highland Park 614-571-9624
- J.C. Sommer..... 614-571-9620
- Monterey 614-571-9622
- Richard Avenue 614-571-9623

To leave a voicemail message for the P.A.R.K. recreation supervisors, call 614-277-3063 or 614-277-3064.

2. It is not the school's responsibility to relay any messages regarding the absence of your child from the P.A.R.K. program. **It is required that a parent leave a message on the P.A.R.K. site cell phone** such as your child was absent, signed out of school early, rode the bus home, etc.

3. Child Tracking Procedure

A P.A.R.K. leader will call the site's voicemail to see if the parent reported the absence. 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 are followed for locating the child:

- a. A leader checks the school office to find out if the child was absent from or signed out of school.
- b. If the child is still not accounted for and a message was not left by the parent, the leader contacts the parent(s) and, if necessary, the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Medical Form, to confirm the child's absence. The recreation supervisor will assess a \$20 tracking fee.

4. End-of-day Closing

Our program closes at 6 p.m. It is your responsibility to make every effort to pick up your child by 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 pickup is subject to the following:

- a. The recreation supervisor 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.
- b. Picking up a child after 6 p.m. for the third time may result in dismissal from the program. This rule is strictly enforced.
- c. The time displayed on the P.A.R.K. cell phone is the official time for the program and will be applied to resolve any discrepancies.

Please remember that picking up your child late is UNCOMFORTABLE for EVERYONE.

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

5. Sign Out

- a. Persons picking up the child must enter the building and inform the leader that the child is leaving.
- b. Each child must be signed out when picked up at the end of the day. A child may not sign himself/herself out. Parent or guardian initials are sufficient. Persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least 18 years of age.
- c. No child will exit the program alone or with any unauthorized person.
- d. 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.
- e. The recreation supervisor 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 have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. An 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 the parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

6. Inclement Weather Days

- a. P.A.R.K. operates only on the days the South-Western City School District is in session. P.A.R.K. is not held on scheduled holidays, teacher in-service days or on any other days school is closed for any reason.
- b. If school is closed for inclement weather, P.A.R.K. is not held. P.A.R.K. does not issue refunds for calamity days/inclement weather closings.
- c. The P.A.R.K. program is closed when schools close 30 minutes or longer prior to regular dismissal time for any type of unscheduled emergency situation such as incoming severe weather. 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 canceled unexpectedly.

7. Emergency Pickup of Child

- a. If contacted by staff or supervisors of the program during the after-school hours for the immediate need to pick up your child from P.A.R.K. due to an illness, injury or other circumstance that jeopardizes the safety of your child or that of any other P.A.R.K. participants, it is imperative that you make arrangements to adhere to this request in a reasonable period of time.
- b. If you are unable to pick up your child or cannot get to the program site in a reasonable time period, it is your responsibility to have alternate persons who are available to do so.
- c. Please be mindful of the stress this may place on your child or the P.A.R.K. staff as they care for your child and the other participants in the program.
- d. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in taking responsibility in these situations.

IV. Daily Activities

1. Snack

- a. All children are to bring their own snack and drinks from home. Carbonated/soft drinks and lollipops or other hard candy are not permitted.
- b. Since we have a set daily snack time, all children must bring a snack.
- c. All children are required to sit with the group during snack time.
- d. We ask that you and your child please avoid sugary foods for snacks. 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.
- e. To avoid the spread of germs and because of allergy concerns, children may not share opened food or utensils.

2. P.A.R.K. Activities

P.A.R.K. leaders are ready to greet the children at 2:40 p.m. Children eat snacks and then get ready to go outside. The program goes outside each afternoon, weather permitting, for at least 30 minutes. Outside time is brief during colder weather, following the 20 degrees Fahrenheit threshold most school systems use for outdoor recess. The children then return to the program's activity area and participate in large group and small group activities until their parents arrive. A calendar of activities is handed out each month highlighting the planned activities; it is not an inclusive list.

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

- 2:30-2:45 p.m. Transition from school classroom to P.A.R.K.
- 2:45-3 p.m. Attendance and snacks
- 3-3:15 p.m. Schedule of daily activities
- 3:15-4 p.m. Outside time/large muscle activities/group games
- 4-5 p.m. Activity stations; individual and group activities
- 5-6 p.m. Structured free time; departures/parent sign outs

3. Clothing and Personal Belongings

Send your child dressed appropriately and comfortably, ready for warm or cold, rain or shine! When the weather is colder, children should have a warm coat, head covering and gloves.

If your child brings personal belongings to the program, he/she is solely responsible for those items. The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department is not responsible for any damaged or lost items.

4. After-school School Activities

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

5. Medication Administration

The P.A.R.K. program has a strict policy against administering any type of medication 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.

6. Electronic Media Policy

Electronic game devices including, but not limited to, Nintendo DS, Gameboy Advance and PSP, and other expensive electronic devices such as cell phones and MP3 players are not permitted at the P.A.R.K. program. Watching television or other videos 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.

V. Request to Separate P.A.R.K. Participants from One Another

1. The P.A.R.K program is designed to provide childcare for school-age children in a group environment, allowing children the opportunity to develop and improve social skills. It is our expectation that all the participants work on building their decision-making and cooperation skills, therefore making intelligent and responsible decisions concerning their own actions and reactions and actions toward one another.
2. In a group atmosphere we are aware that children will seek out friends, may make new friends, but will also naturally face some conflicts with their peers. Keep in mind, conflicts are how children learn to deal with adversity and cope with disappointment.
3. We cannot uphold any request by a parent to keep specific children separated from each other during our P.A.R.K. program. Focusing so much of the P.A.R.K. leaders' attention on managing or keeping two children separated greatly restricts their ability to provide quality care for the remaining children participating in the program.

VI. Behavior Management Policy

1. 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 established to protect each child from hurting himself/herself or others and damaging 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.
2. 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 child tests you, each child 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 are managed through conflict-resolution techniques, such as, leader/child discussion, redirection, offering of choices, removal from the situation, loss of privileges, and, in severe situations, dismissal from the program.

b. Behavior problems are managed according to the following steps.

(1) Leader/Child Conference

- Verbal correction
- Redirect child's actions
- Offer choices
- Offer solutions
- Removal from the problem situation

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

(2) Leader/Parent Conference

(3) Leader/Parent/Supervisor 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.

3. 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, but should never harm, shame or frighten a child. All employees are required to treat children with respect, and use discipline as a learning opportunity.

VII. Emergencies and Safety Policies

1. 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.

2. All children need to have at least two emergency contacts written on their Emergency Medical Forms. These people should be no more than 30 minutes away from the site.

3. Actions for emergencies follow the procedures as stated on the Emergency Medical Form.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Additional Safety Policies

a. No child is to be left unattended or unsupervised. Children may use the restroom or get a drink unsupervised with the leaders' permission if the entire group within the program resides indoors. If the entire group is outdoors/playground, there are group restroom breaks supervised by a P.A.R.K. leader.

b. The staff has immediate access to a working telephone at all times. Each site has a department-issued cell phone that one staff member carries or is near at all times.

c. Fire drills are held randomly on a monthly basis. Tornado drills are also discussed.

- d. 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.
- e. An injury report is completed and filed when injuries occur. You will be asked to sign this form and given a copy of the report.
- f. During colder weather children are expected to be dressed appropriately for outside play including a warm coat, head covering, gloves and other necessary clothing.

VIII. Communicable Disease

1. The staff is required to complete a six-hour training in the Recognition and Treatment of Communicable Diseases.
2. The staff, upon entering the program, observes all children. Those exhibiting the following symptoms or who develop these symptoms at the program are discharged from the program and not permitted to return until 24 hours after these symptoms are no longer present:
 - Diarrhea (passing abnormally loose stools three or more times within a 24-hour period).
 - Severe coughing causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound.
 - Difficult or rapid breathing.
 - Yellowish skin or eyes.
 - Eyes exhibiting redness, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes or burning/itching.
 - Temperature of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness. Temperature is taken via axillary method with a digital thermometer.
 - Untreated skin ailments such as infected patches, unusual spots or rashes.
 - Unusual dark urine or gray 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 is isolated from the rest of the group (within sight of the leaders), provided with a cot and observed carefully. The parent/guardian is called immediately to pick up the child within 30 minutes.

A sign is posted at the school informing parents of exposure to a communicable disease when appropriate. A communicable disease chart also is posted at each site.

3. Mild Illness

A child who is only mildly ill (i.e. stomachache or headache) is allowed to attend. He/she is 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 supervisor.