

GROVE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION
Programmed After-school
Recreation for Kids!

2023-2024
P.A.R.K. PARENT
HANDBOOK



CITY OF GROVE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION

Kingston Center, 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, OH 43123

614-277-3050 • 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
- Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

OPERATING DAYS

- P.A.R.K. operates every day South-Western City Schools are in session.
- There is no program when students do not attend school including scheduled holidays and in-service days and unscheduled closures such as for weather, mechanical issues (e.g., no power) or public-health emergencies.
- Before school hours of operation: 6 to 8 a.m.
- After school hours of operation: 2:30 to 6 p.m.

P.A.R.K. SITES

- P.A.R.K. serves all elementary schools operated by the South-Western City School District located in Grove City.
- Contact: All sites have cell phones with one leader wearing the phone at all times during P.A.R.K. hours. Cell phones are only answered during P.A.R.K. hours, but messages can be left at any time.

Before School at Kingston Center

- 3226 Kingston Ave.
- P.A.R.K. Cell Phone: 614-417-9910

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



GROVE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

614-277-3050 • 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, OH 43123
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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 when you have responsibilities before and after school.

**Our morning program operates from 6 a.m. until children leave for school (approximately 8 a.m.).
The afternoon program operates from the time school dismisses until 6 p.m.**

This handbook contains information on our policies and procedures and will hopefully address any questions. Please keep this handbook in a convenient place or access it at GroveCityOhio.gov. **You are responsible for reading, understanding and adhering to the information in this handbook.**

Our goal is for the program to run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. With your participation and cooperation, it will continue to be a high-quality childcare program.

If you have questions, concerns or comments, please call the Parks and Recreation office at 614-277-3050.

Sincerely,

Grove City Parks and Recreation

P.A.R.K. Philosophy

The P.A.R.K. program is not intended to be an extension of school. Children spend a long day performing highly structured schoolwork, so they benefit from the opportunity to choose from a variety of fun, enriching activities that allow for spontaneity during non-school hours.

The program is developed while considering that attending children represent different developmental stages. P.A.R.K. activities are as easy or as complicated as the abilities of the individual participating allow. Although our basic program has an overarching structure, it allows the children to make choices within that structure so they learn to make intelligent and responsible decisions concerning time allocation that will benefit them in the future.

P.A.R.K. Program Goal

P.A.R.K. aims to provide a safe, secure, enriching and affordable place to be before and 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.
- Foster relationships among participants that help form friendships.
- Encourage independence and good choice-making skills.
- Promote good communication skills.
- Stress cooperation.
- Develop active listening skills.
- Support 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 to contact the child or evaluate the premises and the care provided. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian should notify the P.A.R.K. staff of his/her presence. If special circumstances apply 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, the recreation supervisor or the Grove City Parks and Recreation office.

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

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

I. Enrollment

1. Enrollment Restrictions

Only 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 take place online or in the Parks and Recreation Office in the Kingston Center. 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 necessary to produce documentation to 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 After-school P.A.R.K. is \$215 per child per month, regardless of the number of weeks or school off-days in that month.
- b. The tuition fee for Before-school P.A.R.K. is \$125 per child per month, regardless of the number of weeks or school off-days in that month.
- c. All tuition is to be paid by the 15th day of the previous month in one of the following ways:
 - (1) By mail by check or money order to Grove City Parks and Recreation 3226 Kingston Ave., Grove City, Ohio 43123.
 - (2) In person by cash, check, money order or credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover or American Express) at the Parks and Recreation Office in the Kingston Center, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
 - (3) Online by credit card at bit.ly/gcpReg.
 - (4) In the drop box on the parking-lot side of the Kingston Center by check or money order at any time.
- d. Make checks and money orders 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.
Tuition payments are due by:
 - (1) Tuesday, Aug. 15 (August/September)
 - (2) Friday, Sept. 15 (October)
 - (3) Sunday, Oct. 15 (November)
 - (4) Wednesday, Nov. 15 (December)
 - (5) Friday, Dec. 15 (January)
 - (6) Monday, Jan. 15 (February)
 - (7) Thursday, Feb. 15 (March)
 - (8) Friday, March 15 (April)
 - (9) Monday, April 15 (May/June)
- h. Once a child is enrolled in the program, his/her spot is held until the tuition payment deadline.
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 to withdraw your child. Refunds are only issued if the child is withdrawn prior to the month starting. No partial or pro-rated refunds are issued.

III. Before School: Attendance

1. Drop Off

An adult must accompany the child into the program and complete the sign-in process.

2. Attendance Record

A sign-in sheet is located at the program site. A parent or guardian must sign in the child each day. If the parent/guardian does not sign in the child, the leaders assume the child is not there for the day.

IV. After School: Attendance

1. Attendance is taken daily for safety and security.

If your child will not attend or will be late for the program for any reason (e.g., illness, early pickup, after-school activity), **it is your responsibility to call and leave a voicemail on the site cell phone before 2:15 p.m. 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** for each occurrence.

Site phone numbers:

- Buckeye Woods614-519-4664
- Highland Park614-571-9624
- J.C. Sommer.....614-571-9620
- Monterey614-571-9622
- Richard Avenue614-571-9623

To leave a voicemail message for the P.A.R.K. recreation supervisor, call 614-277-3064. The school does not relay any messages regarding the absence of your child from school or P.A.R.K.

It is required that a parent leave a message on the P.A.R.K. site cell phone before 2:15 p.m. such as your child was absent, signed out of school early, rode the bus home, etc.

2. After-school School Activities Delaying Arrival

If a child participates 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.

3. Child Tracking Procedure

A P.A.R.K. leader checks the site’s voicemail for messages regarding absences.

If a child does not arrive for P.A.R.K. and there is no note, phone call or voice mail informing us of his/her absence, the following steps are completed to locate 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 unaccounted for, the leader contacts the parent(s) and, if necessary, the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Medical Form, to confirm the child’s absence.

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-pickup 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 since they have somewhere to be after work.

5. Pickup/Sign Out

- a. The person picking up the child must enter the building and inform the leader he/she is leaving.
- b. Each child must be signed out. 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 a specific person should not pick up your child. **P.A.R.K. cannot deny non-custodial parent access to a child**, as Ohio law mandates that both parents have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right.
 - (1) An enrolling parent who does not include the other parent on the Emergency Medical Form must file an official court document (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree) or the program must release the child to any parent who can document paternity/maternity.

V. Inclement Weather Days

- a. P.A.R.K. operates only on days the South-Western City School District is in session. It is not held on scheduled holidays, teacher in-service days or any other days school is closed.
- 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. Before school: In the case of a delay to the start time for school due to fog or snow, our program still operates from 6 a.m. until the buses transport the children to their designated sites. Our leaders remain at the program site until all children have left.
- d. After school: P.A.R.K. is closed when schools close 30 minutes or longer prior to regular dismissal time for any unscheduled emergency situation such as incoming severe weather.
- e. Have alternate care arrangements in place for your child in case of unscheduled closures. Please make these arrangements ahead of time with the administration of your child's school. P.A.R.K. is not responsible for children when school is canceled unexpectedly.

VI. Emergency Pickup of Child

- a. If contacted by program staff or supervisors for the immediate need to pick up your child due to illness, injury or other circumstance jeopardizing the safety of your child, other participants or staff members, it is imperative that you adhere to this request in a reasonable period of time.
- b. We must hear from you or a contact person on your emergency form within 15 minutes of calling. Failure to comply may result in dismissal of your child.
- c. 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 available to do so.
- d. 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.
- e. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in taking responsibility in these situations.

VII. Before School: Daily Activities

1. Breakfast

- a. Breakfast is provided to the children daily for no extra cost from 6:30 to 7:15 a.m.
- b. A variety of breakfast items are provided such as fruit, milk, juice, English muffin, open-faced bagel, Pop Tarts, cereals, cheese sticks or breakfast pizza.

2. P.A.R.K. Activities

Your child is provided with a variety of activities ranging from rest, quiet activities and homework time to arts, board games, free-play activities to programmed recreational activities. The activities are chosen taking into consideration that children are at different developmental stages and abilities.

3. Walking to School

Participating students of J.C. Sommer Elementary School are escorted by P.A.R.K. staff as they walk to school. If your child attends J.C. Sommer, submit a signed Walking Permission Form.

Children walk to school in all types of weather; no transportation is provided. Please plan accordingly, ensuring your child has the proper shoes and attire for the conditions.

VIII. After School: Daily Activities

1. Snacks

- a. Since we have a set daily snack time, all children must bring their own snacks and drinks from home. It may be helpful to label snacks separately from lunches.
- b. All children are required to sit with the group during snack time.
- c. A snack should be nutritious and encompass at least two food groups, so please avoid sugary foods. Carbonated/soft drinks and hard candy are not permitted. Ohio Department of Education and Department of Job and Family Services guidelines require nutritious snacks.
- d. To avoid the spread of disease and address allergy concerns, children may not share food or utensils.

2. P.A.R.K. Activities

- a. A calendar of activities is handed out each month highlighting the planned activities; it is not an inclusive list. Site newsletters are distributed electronically each month to the email on file.
- b. 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.
- c. The program goes outside each afternoon, weather permitting, for at least 30 minutes. Outside time is shorter during cold weather. P.A.R.K. follows the temperature threshold most school systems use for outdoor recess: 20°F or warmer including the wind-chill factor.
- d. The children then return to the program's activity area and participate in large-group and small-group activities until their parents arrive.

- e. 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. Take attendance and eat 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

IX. Items from Home

1. Clothing and Personal Belongings

Send your child dressed appropriately and comfortably, ready for warm or cold, rain or shine! Children are encouraged to wear shoes that allow full participation in P.A.R.K. activities or to comfortably walk to school. When the weather is cold, 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.

2. Medication Administration

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

3. Electronic Media Policy

Electronic game devices and other expensive electronic devices such as cell phones and MP3 players are not permitted at the P.A.R.K. program. Program philosophy dictates that activity choices for program participants shall be creative, active and imaginative and provide enriching programming in a safe, fun environment.

X. Request to Keep P.A.R.K. Participants Separated

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. All participants are expected to work on building decision-making and cooperation skills, therefore making intelligent and responsible decisions concerning their own actions, reactions and interactions with others.
2. Children seek out friends, may make new friends, but also naturally face some conflicts with their peers in a group atmosphere. Keep in mind that conflicts are how children learn to deal with adversity and cope with disappointment.
3. We cannot accommodate any request by a parent to keep specific children separated during our 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 participants.

XI. 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. These limits 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 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
 - Correct verbally.
 - Redirect child's actions.
 - Offer choices.
 - Offer solutions.
 - Remove from the 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. It 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.

XII. 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. They are kept on site.
2. **At least two emergency contacts must be listed on each child's Emergency Medical Form. These people should be no more than 30 minutes away from the site.**
3. Actions for emergencies follow the procedures listed on the Emergency Medical Form.
4. For medical conditions listed on the Emergency Medical Form, a *Child Medical/Physical Care Plan Form* must be completed to inform and train the P.A.R.K. leaders in 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 left unattended or unsupervised. A child may use the restroom or get a drink unsupervised with the leaders' permission if the entire group is indoors. If the group is outdoors/ on the playground, there are group restroom breaks supervised by a P.A.R.K. leader.
 - b. Each site has a department-issued cell phone that at least one staff member has immediate access to at all times.
 - c. Fire and tornado drills are held randomly on a regular basis.
 - d. The Parks and Recreation Department and staff are "mandated reporters" and thus required to immediately notify the local public children services agency when child abuse or neglect is suspected.
 - e. When an injury occurs, a report is completed and filed. The parent/guardian signs the report and receives a copy.
 - f. Children are expected to be dressed appropriately for outside play including a warm coat, head covering, gloves and other necessary clothing during cold weather.

XIII. Communicable Diseases

1. The staff is required to complete a six-hour training in the Recognition and Treatment of Communicable Diseases.
2. All children are observed upon entering the program. Those exhibiting the following symptoms or who develop these symptoms during the program are discharged and not permitted to return until 24 hours after 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 100°F or higher combined with any other sign or symptom of illness.
 - 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.
 - Symptoms of contagious respiratory illness including COVID-19 (coughing, sore throat, loss of taste/smell, fatigue, shortness of breath, body aches, etc.).

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 is posted at each site.

3. Mild Illness

A child who is only mildly ill (e.g., stomachache or headache) is allowed to attend, but is carefully observed. At the discretion of the leaders, you may be called and informed of the child's complaints. It is your decision whether or not to pick up your child.

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.