



THE EXPEDITION SCHOOL

July, 2024

Dear Hillsborough Parks and Recreation Board,

Recently, the town amended Article VII - recreation, sections 3-48 through 3-50 of the code of ordinances. This section limits park events to 75 people or less.

This is a request to increase the number of people allowed at parks for school events up to 150 individuals, up to 4x per year.

The Expedition School is located adjacent to Gold Park. We regularly use Gold Park for events to get kids outdoors. This very often occurs with groups of supervised children greater than 75 individuals.

Benefits of bringing kids to the parks in groups include:

1. **Learning**, of course! Over our 10 year positive relationship with the park, we have brought our classes to study the pollinator garden, the river, the invasive plants, the pond water and more! Bringing kids in large supervised groups makes sense for organizing learning outdoors.
2. **Exercise!** From field day to “fun runs,” taking large groups of kids to the park to run and exercise is a great way to promote physical fitness and “getting outdoors.” When we organize events like this it takes a lot of volunteers and planning, and we need to do events like this in groups of larger than 75. For example, we have successfully held a field day and a fun run event at the park bringing groups of about 120 students at a time, plus teachers and volunteers (about 150 total).
3. **Citizenship.** We teach students to help and respect parks. With The Expedition School residing right next door to Gold Park, our students have volunteered in the park for 10 years as a way to show citizenship and give back. Students have cleaned up trash and removed invasive plants and weeds on a regular basis (with approval.) Students, as guided by the local master gardeners, have helped mulch the wildflower area and bee habitat. These activities often include bringing groups of students at a time to the park for volunteer activities above the limit of 75.

Addressing potential concerns:

1. Restroom use: When we bring students, they use the restroom at our school facility prior to going to the park and they stay at the park for a short 30-90 minutes in duration, typically. This reduces the need for students to use restroom facilities at the park, and

when they do, they are supervised. Our past events have never created any issues with restroom overuse.

2. **Parking:** Our students and volunteers walk over from our campus. When volunteers drive and park at the park, it is a limited number of cars, (ex. 1-5). Sometimes we drive a handicapped student to the park. Therefore this does not impact other public members accessing parking. If other schools were to come to the park, they would very likely use a bus, and this would ensure other parking remains open for others.
3. **Clean Up:** When we access the park, we do so responsibly. We train our students to clean up after themselves, and for large events with set-up, our volunteers and staff ensure the park is restored to its original state upon completion of our event.
4. **Sharing space:** When we go to the park, we train our students that it is a public space, and we teach them how to share it with others attending the park. This is an excellent opportunity to teach citizenship and cooperation.
5. **Noise:** Well, children shout and play, but I believe this is the type of noise you want at a park! Our events typically contain this type of noise. We are not holding concerts or things like that at the park.

I request that you revise the provision to allow schools to hold events in the town parks in groups of greater than 75.

Here is an example amendment:

- **Exception to the 75 max person rule: School groups may hold events with up to 150 participants at town parks up to 4 times per year.**

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Tammy Finch

Director of Education and Curriculum

The Expedition School