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# PRAIRIE CROSSING CHARTER SCHOOL



CREATING NATURAL LEADERS

## **Prairie Crossing Charter School Campout Policies and Procedures**

Beginning in fifth grade, students at PCCS take class camping trips. We feel that these trips are a unique opportunity to expand and enhance student learning. We believe that integrating the environment outside the school campus into the curriculum is an effective method of increasing student achievement. In addition, campouts play an integral role in developing environmentally and socially literate citizens. They help foster a sense of place, provide healthy and eco-conscious life-style choices, encourage teamwork and build community. Campouts provide a variety of opportunities to integrate academic learning in many areas, including science, art, history, and physical education.

The following are general procedures for camping trips at PCCS. Specific information about trip locations and logistics will be distributed to students and parents prior to the trips.

### **How to contact us in the event of an emergency at home:**

One of the school staff members on the trip will check in with the school office each day, so you can leave a message and the school will contact us. Or you can call the park office with the pertinent information. The phone numbers of park offices can be obtained on the internet, but we will also provide that information to parents prior to each trip.

### **If your student cannot attend the trip:**

We hope all students will be able to attend these important trips. However, if a student is unable to attend, alternative activities will be assigned that will attempt to give the student a similar educational experience.

### **Forms and fees:**

All camping forms will be available on the PCCS website. Forms and fees are due two weeks prior to the date of the trip. For each trip, each student must turn in:

- First-aid permission form

- Physician authorization form(s) (necessary for all medications)
- Lodging consent form
- Acknowledgement form, stating that parents read and understand this document and located at its conclusion understanding for this form
- Copy of both sides of medical insurance card
- Trip fees (determined by dividing the trip cost among the number of participants)

There are additional forms for adult chaperones to fill out and return.

**Emergency Forms and Medication Forms:**

We will have a copy of your child's PCCS emergency form and forms listed above. If any information has changed since the beginning of the school year please send those changes to us ASAP. All staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR or higher. We will also have personal cell phones to call for assistance in the event of an emergency. In the event that a student gets sick on the trip we will call the parents to arrange the pickup of the student from the campsite. The student will be made as comfortable as possible until being picked up.

Please provide the teachers with any medications needed for your child. Place these items, in their original packaging, in a zip lock bag clearly marked with your child's name. Instructions should be clearly stated on the Physician Authorization form; PCCS cannot dispense any medications without this documentation.

**Packing and Supplies:**

Please refer to the packing list to ensure that your child is prepared for the trip.

Although the school owns most of the necessary group camping gear, there may be a few items that we will need to borrow from families for the whole group to use. We will send out a list of these items prior to each trip. Please inform your child's teacher as soon as possible if you can help us with this! Our trips are not possible without the help of PCCS families and we thank you!

**Facilities:**

Showering *will not* be an option on most camping trips. The campsite is equipped with a water source and pit toilets.

**Food:**

The meals that are prepared on our trip are based on a balance diet, relatively healthy and nutritious. If your child has a specific food allergy please speak with your child's individual teacher about dietary concerns. Depending on the need, you may need to provide alternatives for your child.

**Meals:**

Students will *pack and bring two lunches* from home. All other meals will be prepared at our campsite by students. Students will be split into crews. Each crew will take charge of some aspect of the meal – fire building, cooking and cleaning. On longer trips, there may also be a break crew that has the meal off. Crews will rotate through the meals so that each student does each job at least once during the campout.

**Fire crew:** is in charge of finding firewood, ensuring that there is water nearby, setting up and maintaining a cooking fire, with adult supervision. Students will sign a fire safety contract before they work with fire.

**Cooking crew:** is in charge of preparing the food in accordance with the pre-selected, nutritionally-balanced menu, and creating a buffet line through which other students will file. Cooking crew eats last!

**Clean-up crew:** is in charge of setting up a dish-washing assembly line (similar to farm to table's system) and washing the group/serving dishes. *Each student washes their own personal place settings!* The clean-up crew is also in charge of setting up hand-washing stations and getting water from the pump. Cleaning crew gets to eat first!

Camping hygiene will require the use of alcohol based hand sanitizers in between trips to carry water which would have to be heated over open fires for washing dishes and hands and faces.

**Lodging:**

Students will sleep in school-owned A-frame tents. Although these tents sleep 6, there should be no more than 4 students per tent. Groups will be chosen by teachers with student input. It is required that the attached lodging consent form is returned.

**Safety:**

The forest rangers will be aware of our group and our location. There are parents attending as chaperones along with staff members. Each group will have 3 or more adults which will give us at least a 1 to 5 ratio. Chaperones will not be alone with single students; there will always be at least 2 students with an adult chaperone. Adults will sleep in separate tents within close proximity of student tents. There will be 3 - 4 students per tent. If the students need to use the restroom in the middle of the night, they will take a partner and inform an adult. We will all use the restroom before bedtime to help prevent any need for breaks in the middle of the night. *No student will ever be alone*, as the buddy system will be in effect at all times. Adults will have cell phones to call out in case of an emergency.

**Communication:**

Students will not be able to call home during camping trips. Adults' cell phones will be used to contact the school to provide updates, which may be emailed to parents. Any change in travel plans will be communicated to parents via a phone tree or email. However, some locations have limited cell service and we may not be able to contact the school more than once a day.

In the event of a medical emergency, PCCS staff will promptly contact proper authorities, school administration, and parents.

**Emergency Weather Plan:**

In the event of severe weather we will seek shelter and follow the guidelines set forth by the American Meteorological Society which state, "After the storm has apparently dissipated, or moved on we will wait 30 minutes or more after hearing the last thunder before leaving the safer location" ([http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/Lightning\\_Safety\\_Article.pdf](http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/Lightning_Safety_Article.pdf)).

We will follow weather developments through the internet or telephone and make appropriate decisions given the situation.

**Chaperones:**

In addition to the PCCS teachers on the trip, each class will be accompanied by a limited number of parent chaperones. This trip is not possible without the help of these individuals giving of their time and their cars! Each chaperone is required to read the chaperone expectations and sign the accompanying agreement, in addition to participating in PCCS's volunteer training.

**Transportation:**

We will take a coach bus to and from our trips. The bus will be staying nearby to provide us with planned or emergency transportation while we are there. An extra vehicle will be available on the trip to be used for emergencies.

**Student Behavior Expectations:**

We expect all the students to follow our PBIS agreements:

1. Students will behave safely.
2. Students will behave responsibly.
3. Students will behave respectfully.

If at any time during the campout these agreements are not followed and/or if we feel that a student is not acting appropriately and they are disturbing the other students during any time that student's parents will be called to pick up their child immediately. Students will be given one verbal warning and if the infraction is repeated that student will be dismissed from the trip.

The philosophy of PCCS is using the environment as an outside classroom and to that end all policies and procedures that are to be followed on campus are to be followed off campus as well.

**Student Dress Code:**

Children should dress appropriately for the weather. We encourage students to wear shoes that are good for walking and running; they may not wear open-toed shoes or shoes that do not have backs. Short shorts (arm & thumb length is used as a reference), skirts, spaghetti strap tops, midriff shirts (any shirt that reveals abdominal area), halter tops, and clothing which reveals undergarments are not considered appropriate. Straps on tops should be at least one inch thick (two finger width). No clothing may promote smoking, alcohol, drugs, violence, cults, or groups which advocate violence or drugs. The teachers will be the final authority in determining the appropriateness of student attire on this trip.

**Contraband Items:**

There are items that are absolutely not allowed on the trip. These include but are not limited to:

Soda, pop etc, candy, electronics of any kind (including cell phones and hand held games), knives, lighters, drugs, make-up, perfume, toys, cots and blow up mattresses.

**There are NO EXCEPTIONS AND there will be NO NEGOTIATING!**

Any contraband items will be confiscated and not returned until after the trip. If students are found in possession of drugs and/or weapons they will be immediately dismissed from the trip and parents will be expected to arrange transportation.

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**Acknowledgement Form. Please detach this portion of the form and return it to your child's teacher at least 2 weeks before the trip date.** Students will not be permitted to leave on this trip until this letter is signed, returned, and is on file.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent or guardian of

\_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read, understand, and accept all the information listed in the PCCS Campout Policies and Procedures.