

## Schoolwide Communication Procedures

Parents play an integral role in the educational experience of the children at Prairie Crossing Charter School. Communication between parents, administration, staff, and the board of directors is important. These guidelines are designed to facilitate this communication.

The Board of Directors has the ultimate responsibility for all school policy. The day-to-day operations and functions of the school are the responsibility of the director and the principal. The classroom teachers and specials teachers handle all issues pertaining to their classrooms.

If you have one or two short questions (i.e. questions that are factual and can be answered in one to two sentences), email is encouraged. However, if you think a more involved conversation will be needed or if you have a concern that is emotionally charged, it would be better to call the appropriate person or set up a time to meet with the person face to face. Additionally, if it appears that a lot of follow up emails will be needed it is better to set up a meeting. If the staff member thinks the number or topic of emails is better addressed in person or by phone, he or she can request a meeting or phone conference in lieu of responding by email. Please refrain from copying multiple people unless there is a specific action needed by the people being copied on the email. Also, please do not blind copy multiple people. This often leads to staff members sending emails to others who need to see them when they have, in fact, already received them.

Normally, you can expect acknowledgment of your email within 24 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks) and a more complete response within 72 hours (again excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks)

If you have a concern, please start with the individual who is involved with the issue. If an issue is not satisfactorily resolved, you may ask to have the person(s) directly involved in the next level of decision-making included in discussions. In general, the person's supervisor is the person you would ask to be involved. For teacher assistants this is the teacher, for classroom and specials teachers this is the principal, for special education personnel this is the director of special education, for the principal this is the director, and for the director this is the board. Generally it is best to meet face to face at this point, although email is on occasion still appropriate. Most often the supervisor will request that the person directly involved be present when you meet. This is helpful in resolving matters quickly because the people directly involved in the issue are present and the supervisor does not have to try to resolve sometimes conflicting versions of events without the benefit of having everyone in the same room.

If you have a concern regarding a classroom issue or the curriculum for your child, please contact the teacher directly. He/she is the one with firsthand knowledge of the situation and is the person most likely to be able to quickly answer questions or alleviate concerns. Please do this by email or set up an appointment to speak with the teacher. Please do not walk into classrooms before school or during the school day as this is disruptive and does not allow the teacher to focus on the children's educational activities.

You should also contact teachers regarding specific playground issues; they will confer with the teacher assistants involved in answering your questions or concerns. For specific extracurricular activities, please contact the person in charge of that activity.

If you have questions about school-wide curriculum, extracurricular activities in general, instructional practice, or student discipline beyond the classroom, please contact the principal. You should also contact the principal about school-wide policies and procedures regarding student safety, recess, and other day-to-day operations.

If you have questions about the charter, general philosophy of the school and its curriculum, facilities, hiring and evaluation practices, external communications, or finances, please contact the director.

**Prairie Crossing Charter School  
Revised Transportation Plan  
15 December 2003**

The Prairie Crossing Charter School transportation plan is closely aligned with the school's size, environmental philosophy, dual district boundaries and finances. Door to door bus service for all students will not be offered, since the Charter Schools Law exempts Prairie Crossing from this requirement except for special needs students.

Prairie Crossing Charter School is situated at the far corner of each district. Its students may come from anywhere in a 63 square mile area. It simply cannot commit to door to door bus service. However, being committed to welcoming a diverse array of students from throughout the districts, Prairie Crossing Charter School will coordinate a car pool program designed to address the needs of families beyond walking or biking distance (which is greater than usual given a regional network of trails). The parents of children who are at risk or who are from low income families may be unable to take part in the car pool program. It is important to provide a means by which these children can attend Prairie Crossing Charter School. One of the principles on which the school is founded is the belief that children can learn to respect a diverse group of people by learning next to them and becoming friends with them. The following options will be provided for parents of at risk and low income children who wish to send their children to Prairie Crossing Charter School but cannot take part in the car pool program.

1. Parent volunteers will be sought to pick up and drop off the children whose parents cannot take part in the car pool program. In this way, these children will arrive at school in the same manner as other children and will not be singled out in any way that may make them feel different from other children attending the school.
2. If no parent volunteers can be found to pick up and drop off children and there are only a few children that need transportation, Prairie Crossing Charter School will hire a person to pick up and drop off these children using his or her car. In this case, Prairie Crossing Charter School would register with the Illinois Secretary of State as a School Bus Driver Employer. Prairie Crossing Charter School will insure that the person obtains and maintains a valid bus driver permit. This includes
  - an initial classroom course for school bus drivers;
    - ♦ a minimum of two hours classroom training annually related to driving responsibilities;
    - ♦ participation in a Federally required drug and alcohol testing program, possessing a valid and properly classified Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a Passenger Endorsement and properly classified school bus driver permit;
    - ♦ completion and certification of a passed annual physical examination on a form prescribed by and available from the Secretary of State's Office; and
    - ♦ Criminal background check including fingerprinting through the Illinois State Police.

Prairie Crossing Charter School will further insure that any vehicle used to transport children by an employee meets the requirements for a Division I vehicle. Under no circumstances will a Division II vehicle be used to transport students to and from school.

All vehicles will have proof of adequate insurance on file at PCCS and will complete a safety inspection every six months at an Official Testing Station regulated by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

3. If the number of children needing transportation is large enough, Prairie Crossing Charter School will lease a school bus to transport the children to and from school. The Director of Prairie Crossing Charter School or his/her designee will obtain documentation from the bus company insuring that the drivers used hold valid bus driver permits and that their buses are maintained and inspected as required. In this case the Director of PCCS or his/her designee will do the following to insure the safety of school bus-transported children:

- Supervise school bus emergency evacuation drills for all bus-riding students on school property twice annually and maintain documentation;
- Insure classroom instruction in safe bus-riding practices by classroom teachers for all bus-riding students twice annually including the dangers in the loading and unloading zone and maintain documentation; and
- Insure that all bus-riding students have copies of bus-riding rules which include the consequences for gross disobedience or misconduct.

-adopted by the Prairie Crossing Charter School Board  
15 December 2003

**Prairie Crossing Charter School  
Volunteer Policy  
17 November 2003**

Prairie Crossing Charter School encourages the participation of the entire family in the education process and emphasizes the importance of a pledge to life-long learning. The parental role in achieving the Prairie Crossing vision is critical. This role can take many forms. All parents are encouraged to provide a home atmosphere in which their children are supported in their educational goals. Frequent two-way communication between school and home is a hallmark of PCCS. This serves to keep parents informed of their children's progress and any special help they may need. It also provides an opportunity for the parents to discuss any questions or concerns with school personnel. Parents of Prairie Crossing Charter School students are welcome to volunteer for many school activities in the classroom; as chaperones and drivers for field trips; as helpers in the maintenance of the school; as coaches, as participants in Parent Staff Organization (PSO); as members of the school board or its committees, task forces, etc.; in contributing special talents and skills; or by providing financial contributions to the school.

**However, no parent is required to volunteer at the school or provide financial contributions.** Children will not be discriminated against in any way if parents are unable or choose not to volunteer or contribute financially. **Volunteerism and financial contributions are not requirements for enrolling in or remaining at Prairie Crossing Charter School.**

-adopted by the Prairie Crossing Charter School Board  
17 November 2003

**Prairie Crossing Charter School  
Policy for Electronic Communications  
21 February 2006**

Prairie Crossing Charter School maintains an electronic list of email addresses of parents, guardians, and other community members who agree to allow the school to send communications to them electronically. The main purpose of this list is to provide an easy way for the school and the PSO to distribute information such as school newsletters, board and committee meeting agendas, information about co- and extra-curricular activities, and notices regarding school functions. The email addresses of parents, guardians, and other relatives (e.g. grandparents) also are shared with classroom teachers to assist in their distribution of classroom newsletters and other important classroom information. Email addresses will not be shared with anyone other than staff members and PSO officers unless express written permission is granted. Emails will be sent in a manner which does not disclose the email addresses of members of the list to others.

This list also may be used to send information that may be of interest to the school community but that is not directly related to the school. Examples of this are notices for activities in which our students can participate but that are not sponsored by the school; notices of lectures, informational sessions, lectures, courses, or other events which may be of interest to our students or their parents; distribution of information about the Learning Farm or other organizations with which the school collaborates; providing information about tutors with whom the school is familiar; and distribution of other information about topics of interest to the school community.

This list will not be used to promote commercial activities unrelated to the school and its mission nor will it be used to lobby or otherwise attempt to influence politics. Examples of inappropriate items are advertising of home sales, promoting the sale of products by individuals or businesses, and endorsement of candidates or legislation.

Release of Information Policy – passed 1/04/02

All information about Prairie Crossing Charter School, its committees, Board, and Parent-Staff Organization will be released through the Prairie Crossing Charter School Office. In particular, this refers to: press releases, informational brochures, correspondence bearing PCCS letterhead, letters signed by anyone acting in an official capacity for PCCS, or fundraising letters.