

EST. 1999

PRAIRIE CROSSING
CHARTER SCHOOL



CREATING NATURAL LEADERS

Parent/Student Handbook

2024-2025

School Mission

We believe that children are our best hope to improve the world.

Vision Statements

Environmental Learning

The environment is at the center of everything we do.

Academic Excellence

Through innovative educational experiences graduates are academically prepared, confident of who they are and environmentally responsible.

Partner with Parents

We partner with parents to provide children with a personalized education experience, where children learn the value of education, community and the environment.

Personal Responsibility

Children are empowered to make a positive difference for themselves and their communities.

Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to a new school year at Prairie Crossing Charter School! Whether you are new to our school or a familiar face, we are pleased to be traveling along with you on your school journey. We are excited and look forward to continuing truly meaningful partnerships with our families, staff and community, so that our students will thrive academically, socially and environmentally.

This handbook is intended to provide answers to questions and share guidelines that ensure a safe and enriching learning environment for every PCCS student. Please familiarize yourself with the information so that we can forge an effective partnership and provide you with the small school personalized care that you expect and deserve. Thank you!

Parent/Student Handbook 2024-2025 Receipt Verification

It is important that you and your student read this handbook and discuss these expectations together.

After reading the handbook, please acknowledge so by completing this [Receipt Form](#) before Friday, August 30 2024.

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General Information

Prairie Crossing Charter School
1531 Jones Point Road, Grayslake, IL 60030-3536
Phone number: 847-543-9722
Fax number: 847-543-9744
Absence Line: 224 -541-3960
Bully Hotline: 847-986-3504
DCFS: 800-25-ABUSE (22873)
School Violence Tipline: 800-477-0024

Office Hours: 7:30 to 4:00 Monday through Friday
Summer Hours: Tuesday's and Wednesday's between 8:00 and 1:00 or by appointment.

E-mail: pccsoffice@pccharterschool.org
Website: www.prairiecrossingcharterschool.org

Useful Links

Website's [Parent Portal](#) -
Temporary Username: **PCCSparent**
Temporary Password: **pccsHawks_Y25!!**



Prairie Crossing Charter School Calendar

2024-2025

August 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	ER	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	ER	31

September 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	ER	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	ER	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	ER	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	CER	CER	27	28	29	30

December 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	ER	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

LEGEND	
	Break
	Holidays/Non Student Attendance
	End of Trimester

Aug. 14-16...No School: Teacher In-Service
 Aug. 19First Day of School / Early Release
 Aug. 30Early Release: Teacher In-Service

Sept. 2.....No School: Labor Day
 Sept. 20.....Early Release: Teacher In-Service

Oct. 10.....Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Oct. 11No School: Teacher In-Service
 Oct. 14No School: Columbus Day

Nov. 5No School: Election Day
 Nov. 15Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Nov. 15End of 1st Trimester (61)

Nov. 25.....Conferences - Early Release
 Nov. 26Conferences - Early Release
 Nov. 27No School: Nonattendance Day
 Nov. 28.....No School: Thanksgiving Day
 Nov. 29No School: Nonattendance Day

Dec. 20Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Dec. 23-Jan. 3.....No School: Winter Break

Jan. 6School Reconvenes
 Jan. 17Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Jan. 20No School: MLK Jr. Day

Feb. 13Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Feb. 14..... No School: Teacher In-Service
 Feb.17..... No School: President's Day

Mar. 7.....End of 2nd Trimester (64 days)
 Mar. 7Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Mar. 20Conferences - Early Release
 Mar. 21.....Conferences - Early Release
 Mar. 24 - March 28 ...No School: Spring Break
 March 31School Reconvenes

Apr. 18Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 Apr. 21-25 ...Earth Week

May 9Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 May 23Early Release: Teacher In-Service
 May 26No School: Memorial Day

June 58th Grade Graduation
 June 6End of 3rd Trimester (59 days)
 June 6.....Last Day of School: Early Release

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	ER	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	ER	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	1

March 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	ER	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	CER	CER	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	ER	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	ER	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	ER	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	ER	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Key	
	All Day Teacher In-Service
	Early Release Teacher In-Service
	Legal Holidays Recommended by ISBE
	Early Release Parent Teacher Conference.
	Non-Attendance Day
	First, Last Day, and End of Trimester. ER

Calendar of Events

Dates	Event
August 8-13 Thursday - Tuesday	New Teacher In-Service
August 14-16 Wednesday - Friday	All Teacher In-Service
August 15, Thursday	Back to School Picnic
August 19, Monday	Early Release: First Day of School
August 26, Monday	School Pictures
August 30, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service Day
September 2, Monday	No School: Labor Day
September 9-13 Monday - Friday	School Attendance Week
September 20, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
October 10, Thursday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
October 11, Friday	No School: Teacher In-Service
October 14, Monday	No School: Columbus Day
October 31, Thursday	Halloween Activities
November 5, Tuesday	No School: Election Day
November 15, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
November 15, Friday	End of 1 st Trimester
November 17, Friday	Report Cards Go Home
November 25, Monday	Early Release: Parent Teacher Conferences – 2 PM – 7 PM
November 26, Tuesday	Early Release: Parent Teacher Conferences – 2 PM – 4 PM
November 27, Friday	No School: Nonattendance Day
November 28, Thursday	No School: Thanksgiving Day
November 29, Friday	No School: Nonattendance Day
December 20, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service

December 23 - January 3	No School: Winter Break
January 6, Monday	School Reconvenes
January 17, Friday	Early Release: Teacher Inservice
January 20 Monday	No School: MLK Jr. Day
February 13, Thursday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
February 14, Friday	No School: Teacher In-Service
February 17, Monday	No School: President's Day
March 7, Friday	End of 2nd Trimester
March 7, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
March 8, Friday	Report Cards Go Home
March 20 - Thursday	Early Release: Parent/Teacher Conferences – 2 PM – 7 PM
March 21, Friday	Early Release: Parent Teacher Conferences - 2 PM - 4 PM
March 24 - March 28, Monday-Friday	No School: Spring Break
March 31, Monday	School Reconvenes
April 18, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
April 21-25, Monday-Friday	Earth Week
May 9, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
May 23, Friday	Early Release: Teacher In-Service
May 26, Monday	No School: Memorial Day
June 5, Thursday	Early Release: 8th Grade Only
June 5, Thursday	8th Grade Graduation
June 6, Friday	End of 3rd Trimester
June 6, Friday	Early Release: Last Day of School

*Prairie Crossing Charter School has 185 school attendance days.
The school calendar is set each year by the Board, with final approval from the Regional Office of Education
and the Illinois State Board of Education.*

Personnel - School Administration

Executive Director: Geoff Deigan

- Leads the school's brand, mission, and vision,
- Lead spokesperson for the School,
- Leads, hires, supervises, and evaluates the Administration,
- Manages the School financials and budget.
- Creates and implements the School's mission and vision,
- Directs the development and implementation of the School's Strategic Plan,
- Defines and implements a positive culture and climate within the school community,
- Works closely with the Board and Committees,
- Ensures compliance with all requirements of the School's chartering authority and other regulatory agencies,
- Cultivates relationships with partners and outside organizations and resources, and
- Directs and conducts outreach activities to attract educationally disadvantaged students and to promote the mission of the School.

Director of Special Education and Student Services: Melissa Thompson

- Oversees Student Services Staff,
- Responsible for Federal grant development, writing, management, and reporting,
- Oversees Special Education and 504 requirements and procedures,
- Oversees the school's MTSS and Consolidated District Grant Plan,
- Oversees instructional interventions in reading and math,
- Assists in the planning and overseeing of professional development activities.
- Leads, hires, supervises, and evaluates Student Services Staff
- Serves as primary contact for Special Education and related services,
- Manages Special Education IEP and 504 requirements and procedures,
- Manages the school's MTSS and Consolidated District Grant Plan,
- Manages instructional interventions in reading and math,
- Assists in the planning and overseeing of professional development activities,
- Serves as the school's Homeless Student Liaison

Dean of Faculty and Students: Tony Zamiar

- Serves as Primary contact person for parents & students regarding learning, classroom environment, discipline and behavior,
- Leads, with the Dean of Environmental Learning, the implementation and instruction of all Core and Environmental Academic Standards,
- Oversees the planning and implementation of the school's Professional Development Plan,
- Leads evaluation & supervision of Faculty,
- Oversees and implements school safety plan,
- Oversees assessments; NWEA, IAR, ISA, etc.
- Oversees instructional interventions in reading and math,
- Plans school assemblies,
- Completes and oversees School Instructional Schedule,
- Oversees extra-curricular activities,
- Serves as PSO liaison,
- Bilingual Director for Multicultural Services.

Dean of Sustainability : Naomi Hershiser

- Leads Education for Sustainability (EfS) and related programs,
- Leads the implementation and instruction of our academic curriculum incorporating EfS and centered on the environment,
- Manages off campus classroom trips and plans on-campus outdoor learning initiatives,

- Coaches staff in problem, project and place-based learning (P3BL), service-learning, and environmental education,
- Oversees and provides professional development opportunities related to EfS, P3BL and Environmental Learning,
- Oversees grant opportunities in Environmental Learning,
- Assists with outreach opportunities, as applicable, with the school's unique environmental initiatives.

CARES Coach: Danielle Venegoni

- Leads staff growth in classroom management and implementation of CARES
- Provides coaching to classroom staff to address classroom organization and management,
- Problem solves with staff to develop innovative strategies, preventative approaches, and proactive plans for students who exhibit at-risk behaviors,
- Proactively plans with students strategies to improve success in the classroom,
- Promotes school-parent relationships when discussing specific student problems with parents.
- Assists in organizing parent conferences and other times when staff is available to parents to discuss their child’s learning and behavior,
- Assists in the promotion of positive school climate and staff morale through recognition programs honoring those who excel and other initiatives,
- Maintains office discipline data and oversees implementation of ISS and Student Detention Programs.

Board of Directors

Prairie Crossing Charter School is governed by a Board of Directors who help ensure the success of our mission and vision. The Board currently consists of nine directors, each serving a 3-year term. Each year, three new directors are elected - one (1) elected by the parents of PCCS and two (2) are Board appointed. Click [here](#) to find Board member contact information and bios, and [here](#) to find information about Board and Committee meetings.

Teachers and Instructional Assistants

The staff at Prairie Crossing Charter School meets all credential requirements as outlined in Charter School Law. Prairie Crossing Charter School prides itself on its excellent staff of professional educators who are dedicated to providing the best possible education for the students of PCCS. For a complete listing of staff and contact information, please visit our [website](#).

Safety, Health and Wellness Medical Information

Health, Dental & Vision

The School Code of Illinois requires that physical examinations and immunizations be completed prior to entrance into each of the following grades: early childhood, kindergarten or first grade and in sixth grade. Transfer students will be required to produce evidence they meet these requirements. Students transferring to Prairie Crossing Charter School (PCCS) at any grade level from out of state must present a current physical examination (less than one year old) from a licensed physician and the required immunizations for their age/grade level. The Board policy for Health, Examinations, Immunizations and Exclusion of Students is located in the back of this handbook. Required timelines for physicals and immunizations are as follows:

Kindergarten	Physical Examination, Vision & Dental Examination
1st Grade	No Requirement
2nd Grade	Dental Examination
3rd Grade	No Requirement
4th Grade	No Requirement
5th Grade	No Requirement (Sports Physical/Concussion Information Sheet if participating in sports)
6th Grade	Physical Examination, Dental Examination, Sports Physical/Concussion Information Sheet if participating in sports. All students entering, transferring or advancing into 6 th grade will be required to provide proof of recent Tdap vaccine (containing tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis)
7th Grade	Sports Physical/Concussion Information Sheet if participating in sports
8th Grade	Sports Physical/Concussion Information Sheet if participating in sports

Illness

It is very important that your child stays home if they are ill. If your child has a temperature above 100° F; recent diarrhea or vomiting; rash; or discharge from the eyes, ears, or nose, please keep your child at home. Remember, your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. *Please call the absence line to notify before school starts on the day that your child is ill.*

If your child has one of the communicable diseases identified by the Department of Education, please notify the office so that other parents can be contacted. These communicable diseases include but are not limited to: strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, pinkeye and chicken pox. Remember to notify the office for each subsequent day the child will be absent. A message may always be left on voicemail. Additionally, absences that exceed 3 consecutive dates will require a doctor's note upon return. Please understand that absences that have exceeded 10 days, unless excused, could jeopardize matriculation to the next grade/level/band.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be contacted. It is expected that one of the parents will pick up the child as soon as possible. If this is not possible, one of the adults listed on your child's emergency form will be contacted to pick up your child.

Exemption from Physical Activity

[Procedure for Exemption from Physical Activity](#)

Medication at School

[Administering Medication to Students Policy](#)

Medication may be administered during regular school hours and during school related activities only when absolutely necessary for the critical health and well-being of your child. If

your child needs to take prescription or nonprescription medicine at school, your child's pediatrician must fill out the Prescription or Non-Prescription Medication Physician Authorization Form. You may want to ask for one of these forms for your files if you anticipate using one during the year. Your doctor may always fax the school the permission form, if necessary. The fax number is 847-543-9744.

Only those medications that are necessary to maintain the student in school will be administered during school hours. Requests for administration of medication will be reviewed on an individual basis. The Charter School retains the discretion to reject requests for administration of medication.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who must receive medication during school hours should be informed that medication can only be administered through one of the following methods:

- A. Self-administration of medication (inhaler, epinephrine, insulin)
- B. Parent or guardian may come to the school to administer the medication
- C. School administrator/staff designated by administrator

The particular option chosen for a student requires that the decision be made with the input of the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's physician. Medications must be brought to school in the original container, which is properly labeled. The medication shall display:

- A. Student's name and prescription number
- B. Name and dosage of medication
- C. Date and number of refills
- D. Licensed physician's name
- E. Pharmacy name, address, and phone number
- F. Name or initials of pharmacist
- G. Administration route or other directions

A student may carry and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen®) and/or asthma medication only if a "[School Medication Authorization Form](#)" authorizing the student to carry and self-administer such medication is executed by the student's parent or guardian and provided to the administration.

Except for EpiPen or asthma medication as stated in these Procedures, a parent/guardian must submit a written request for a student to receive medication during a field trip. See field trip procedures for further information.

The School Medication Authorization Form and other physician's orders will be kept in the student's health folder with a copy to the appropriate administration file. Please remember that it is the parents' responsibility to have prescription medicines refilled. If an Administrator administers any medication to a student, a written record of the dosage and time will be put in the student's temporary file and parent/guardian notified.

Concussions/Head Injuries

Student safety at PCCS is taken seriously. All staff receive CPR and First Aid training and are knowledgeable in providing basic care for injuries.

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to

the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. You can't see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

“Pressure in head”	Headaches
Neck pain	Nausea or vomiting
Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision	Balance problems or dizziness
Feeling sluggish or slowed down	Sensitivity to light or noise
Drowsiness	Feeling foggy or groggy
Amnesia	Change in sleep patterns
Fatigue or low energy	“Don’t feel right”
Nervousness or anxiety	Sadness
More emotional	Irritability
Concentration or memory problems	Confusion (forgetting game plays)
Repeating the same question/comment	

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

Appears dazed	Headaches
Vacant facial expression	Nausea or vomiting
Confused about assignment	Balance problems or dizziness
Forgets plays	Sensitivity to light or noise
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Feeling foggy or groggy
Moves clumsily or displays incoordination	Change in sleep patterns
Answers questions slowly	“Don’t feel right”

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion?

Students and Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play and activities immediately. Continuing with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young person especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the child suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage students and athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete’s safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any student or athlete suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the activity immediately. No child may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the child should continue for several hours. You should also inform your child's teacher or coach if you think that your child may have a concussion.

For more information about concussions, please review the [PCCS Concussion Policy](#) and [Procedure for Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries](#). If you believe your child has suffered a concussion, please contact medical personnel immediately.

School Safety

All doors to the school buildings will be locked. *All parents and visitors must report to the Kennicott Building to sign in and receive a Visitor's Pass before proceeding on campus.* Parents bringing a student late, dropping off supplies, or picking a student up early need to check in at the main office. No visitor will be allowed access to any building until they have checked in.

Evacuation Drills

PCCS conducts at least three (3) evacuation drills per school year. Some of the drills will not have advanced notice and may happen in inclement weather. A floor plan of the building showing the routes and exits to be used for fire drills are placed in every room on campus. Students must become familiar with this plan for each room they will occupy during the school day. [School Safety Drill Act](#)

Law Enforcement Drills

PCCS will have at least one (1) law enforcement drill a year that specifically focuses on a school shooting incident. The staff has advance notice of the required drill prior to its occurrence so that they can prepare the students and ensure that best practices are followed if this type of incident were to occur.

Severe Weather/Shelter-in-Place Drills

The school will conduct at least one (1) severe weather/shelter-in-place drill during the school year. The staff has advance notice of the required drill prior to its occurrence so that they can prepare the students and ensure that best practices are followed if this type of incident were to occur.

Supervision on an Open Campus

With our open campus and emphasis on outdoor learning, On occasion, students may be out of direct sight lines of a supervising adult. In these situations, students are within close proximity to adults, but the line of sight may be obscured by factors such as vegetation or terrain features. Examples of this might include solo spots and field experiences. In solo spots, an activity in which students sit in nature and reflect in their journals, students are given boundaries that are clearly visible by teachers, but students may choose to sit in a location surrounded by tall grasses or behind a shrub. When out of the direct sight of an adult, students will be in sight of or partnered with other student(s) at all times.

There are times when older students in the Carson building may need to come to the office for medication or first aid, or older students may go to band practice in the barn. In these instances, students may travel with an adult or student partner.

Wellness Policy Implementation

In accordance with the [wellness policy](#), several procedures are in place to make sure that the school promotes physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual wellness.

Physical Wellness Physical wellness involves maintaining a level of health such that we are able to participate comfortably in life's daily activities. Healthy bodies are imperative to healthy minds, and allow our students to thrive in their academic and personal pursuits. Physical health is promoted both through what we eat and how we exercise our bodies.

Food is an integral part of our curriculum. It provides the cultural context through which many of our celebrations and stories exist, and valuable learning opportunities. At Prairie Crossing Charter School, we wish to promote sustainable food choices – food that is healthy to our bodies, produced in a manner that is environmentally responsible, and economically feasible. Sustainable food often means food that is locally grown and produced, that has minimal packaging, and that is whole or “real,” unprocessed food.

Food offerings at PCCS need to be safe and inclusive for all students. All students will be asked to wash their hands before lunch or other food activities. Each student will pick up after themselves including discarding the remains of their food into the proper containers, wiping off their section of the table, and picking up crumbs under their chair and table. Students will have thirty minutes for lunch.

When food is offered to students as part of a learning opportunity or celebration, we will ensure that allergies and dietary restrictions are accommodated. To that end, when food will be present in the classroom, families will be made aware at least 24 hours in advance. Ingredients will be provided on request, and we will work with families to create alternative arrangements if the food offerings do not meet a student's needs.

Fitness

Fitness is encouraged at PCCS through our programs and scheduling. Each class, grades K through 8, has 30 minutes of recess on a daily basis before or after lunch, allowing students the opportunity to move around and play outdoors (weather permitting). Academic recess may be implemented when the classroom teacher deems it necessary to help provide support for assignments and learning. At recess, students will need to play in designated play areas. School equipment must be handled with care. All students need to go out for recess unless they have a written excuse from their parents.

In addition, each class has structured physical activity in PE 3 times per week. Our environmental programs provide further opportunities for students to be physically active. Outdoor learning experiences involve walking and movement and exposure to fresh air.

Social Wellness

Social wellness involves connecting with others, and maintaining positive relationships with the people with whom we interact. Prairie Crossing Charter School is a community of learners. We strive to create a culture of belonging, where everyone feels as though they are important

members of the community. We promote social wellness in many ways. Students engage in group projects on a daily basis, working collaboratively with their peers and their buddy classes. Classes participate in team-building and group bonding activities, including overnight trips in 5th through 8th grade. Our CARES program encourages respectful interactions, and the school participates in Anti-Bullying Week (Peace Week) in which all classes engage in activities designed to help students recognize and stand up against bullying. The school counselors provide support for students that need social support.

Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness is the awareness and understanding of one's own feelings and the ability to be able to cope with life's challenges. We encourage students to be reflective in their daily lives. Students have the opportunity to go to Solo Spots, taking time to think, journal, and get in touch with the world around them. Through our trips and our rigorous academic curriculum, we aim to challenge each student to try new things. Being provided with challenges that are difficult, but achievable, increases self-efficacy and resilience.

The school has a wide variety of professionals on staff to help students who are experiencing emotional challenges.

Intellectual Wellness

Intellectual wellness means the desire to learn new things, and involves being able to improve our minds by incorporating new ideas into our existing mental models. Through the school's CARES initiatives (*Collaborate, Aware, Responsible, Empowered and Sustainable*) students will have many opportunities to expand their learning, become natural leaders and promote healthy communities.

Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual wellness recognizes that people search for meaning in the world, and it involves personal clarification of values and morals. PCCS encourages spiritual wellness through connections with the natural world, reflection, and by asking students to think about what's important to them.

We encourage families to share their cultural traditions with their students' classes. Although we believe that attendance in school is extremely important, we respect the rights of any family to choose not to have their students participate in school activities because of religious obligations.

Special Occasions & Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a wonderful celebration and we want to honor them at PCCS. We will ensure that birthday celebrations are inclusive of all students and model celebrating without food. Families can choose to provide a gift to the classroom in honor of their child's birthday. Families can arrange with their classroom teacher if they would like to take time to conduct a celebratory activity such as playing a game or reading a book aloud; these celebrations can be done on or close to a student's birthday, or at a date/time that works for both the teacher and family. Birthday parties are important and special to all students. *However, distribution of invitations and thank-you notes must take place out of school.* Talking about birthday parties at school should be kept to a minimum to respect all students.

Classroom Parties and Celebrations

We celebrate a variety of holidays including Earth Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, and many other multicultural celebrations. These festivities may be celebrated with songs, dance, art projects, and food.

Three classroom parties are held during the year: Halloween, December Holidays, and Valentine's Day (K-4)/Spring (5-6). Celebrations for these holidays will be held for one hour at the end of the school day. In seventh and eighth grade, these celebrations may be held in the evenings rather than during the school day (i.e. school dance). All food and treats for school-hours holiday celebrations should be communicated to families at least 24 hours in advance so alternative arrangements can be made for students with dietary restrictions.

These procedures may be used as an opportunity to educate students on the importance of moderation, and the idea that food is to be approached as a treat – something different and out of the ordinary, that is to be savored and celebrated as part of the festivities. Parents and volunteers invited to participate at class parties must agree to not photograph students other than their own.

Lunch, Recess, and Snacks

All students will be asked to wash their hands before lunch. Each student will pick up after themselves including discarding the remains of their lunch into the proper containers, wiping off their section of the table, and picking up crumbs under their chair and table. Students will have thirty minutes for lunch.

Students in grades 1-8 have thirty minutes of recess before or after lunch. In 6th through 8th, Academic Recess may be implemented when the classroom teacher deems it necessary to help provide support for assignments and learning. At recess, students will play in designated play areas. School equipment must be handled with care. All students need to go out for recess unless they have a written excuse from their parents. Students are encouraged to bring a trash free nutritious snack for mid-morning or mid-afternoon, depending on their lunch hour. They may bring a beverage in a reusable container.

Trash Free Lunch Program

In keeping the environment at the center of everything we do, Prairie Crossing Charter School encourages students to bring a trash free lunch and snack to school. Examples include:

- A reusable lunch box or bag.
- A cloth napkin.
- A water bottle/reusable drink bottle.
- Reusable silverware, if needed.
- Reusable containers for food storage.

Many excellent products are available both at stores and online. While PCCS does not promote or endorse any specific products, <http://www.wastefreelunches.org> and <https://www.globalstewards.org/waste-free-lunch.htm> both offer suggestions and ideas for products and strategies that will help families pack trash-free lunches. All classrooms are equipped with microwaves for lunch heat-ups, if desired. Exceptions may be made for field trips when students will be carrying their lunches around all day; teachers will inform parents in advance when this is the case.

Educational Program

Academic Excellence

We want students to be proud of their work and to produce work of the highest quality and to the best of their ability. Essential to academic excellence is academic honesty. Behavior that is unacceptable includes, but is not limited to:

- Working with others on projects that are meant to be completed individually;
- Copying another student's work;
- Looking at or copying another student's assessment answers;
- Allowing another student to look at or copy answers from an assessment;
- Using any other method to get/give assessment answers;
- Taking an assessment in part or in whole to use or to give others;
- Copying information from a source without proper attribution;
- Taking papers or portions of papers from other students, publications, or the Internet;
- Having someone other than the student prepare the student's work; and
- Forging an adult signature.

All incidents of academic dishonesty will have serious consequences, as detailed in the [Discipline Policy](#). This also includes proper use of technology. Every student must sign an *Appropriate Use Technology Contract* regarding the use of computers, software and the Internet.

Assessment Testing

As required by the Illinois State Board of Education, beginning in third grade, students will be tested each year. In addition, a nationally normed standardized test will be administered to second through eighth graders. [Assessment schedule](#).

Portfolios and Papers Home

At Prairie Crossing Charter School, most of the learning takes place through the use of hands-on materials. Each child will be keeping a portfolio of projects that will be shared with parents during conferences or other special occasions, and used to help students prepare for student-led conferences. Papers such as tests and other assignments will be sent home in a timely fashion so parents are kept abreast of their student's progress.

Conferences and Report Cards

PCCS holds parent teacher conferences twice a year in November and March. Fall conferences are teacher-led/student attended (with the exception of Kindergarten which is parent attended); spring conferences are student-led conferences. All families are encouraged to attend a conference with their student's teacher. Report cards are issued for each trimester in K through 8th grade. Progress reports are distributed mid-trimester for grades 5 - 8. Both report cards and progress reports are emailed to parents.

Grades 5-8 Grading Procedure

When class work is completed and turned in, teachers are able to determine a student's level of understanding. At PCCS, students will be required to turn all assignments in regardless of the due date. It is extremely important that students understand the purpose of deadlines to promote personal responsibility. In the event assignments are late, the following grading procedure will apply:

Grades 5-6

- Assignments turned in 1 day late 5% off final grade
- Assignments turned in 2 days late 10% off final grade
- Assignments turned in 3 days late 15% off final grade
- Assignments turned in 4 days late 20% off final grade
- Assignments turned in after 4 days 30% off final grade

Grades 7-8

- Assignments turned in 1 day late 10% off final grade
- Assignments turned in 2 days late 20% off final grade
- Assignments turned in 3 days late or more 30% off final grade

Projects Throughout the year, students in 5th-8th grade will work on projects of varying lengths and difficulties. These projects may be done individually, with partners or in groups. The expectation for all students is to complete all projects. Teachers will develop rubrics for both the students and parents to follow to assure due dates and content requirements are met. Since projects are more in-depth and involved, rubrics will incorporate a score that will take into consideration timelines and due dates. Therefore, a student will not receive a lower grade for the quality of the work. Points may be deducted from the rubric where points have been assigned to meeting due dates and timelines. This ultimately may result in a lower overall grade.

Occasionally, projects are done with one or more partners; teachers may have multiple grades resulting in a group grade and an individual grade. If a student is having difficulties in a group they are working with, they are expected to notify the teacher early on in the assignment so the teacher is aware *prior* to the due date.

Since teachers use a variety of ways to assess a student's understanding of the curriculum, each teacher will explain the breakdown of the final grade. Homework will be no more than 20%; the other 80% will derive from quizzes, tests, projects and other authentic assessments. If you have any questions as to how a teacher is grading, please ask them. By keeping strong lines of communication open, teachers, parents and students can work together to ensure a successful student experience.

PowerSchool

PowerSchool is an easy to use, web-based student information system. It provides parents, students and teachers with a tool to communicate student performance. PowerSchool may be accessed from any place the parent/guardian can access the Internet. The application is a secure link that encrypts the data to and from the end user. In addition, a username and password are provided to allow access for only authorized users to the appropriate student records. This web-based student information system is used for grades 1-8. Please be aware teachers use this system to update homework information and grades. If you need to discuss grades or homework, please discuss these items with your child's teacher. If you are new to the school this year, the office will provide you with a username and password.

Class Placement

We at PCCS recognize that class placement is extremely important to students, parents and teachers. Therefore, we want to provide you with information on how we go about this crucial

process. Please review the Class Placement Procedure & Guidelines [HERE](#). Any parental feedback and/or suggestions must be submitted to the Dean between the dates of April 3rd through May 1st.

Curriculum

Prairie Crossing Charter School provides a rigorous, integrated academic curriculum centered on the environment. Curriculum overviews can be accessed through the [school's webpage](#).

Remote Learning

Should the school be forced to close due to weather or other unexpected conditions, PCCS may use remote learning to conduct school. [Remote Learning Guidelines](#)

Classroom Procedures and Schedules

At the beginning of each school year, the classroom teacher determines classroom procedures and schedules. Both classroom procedures and schedules are available at Parent Curriculum Night in the fall. Each teacher will determine a classroom management system. This system is available from the teacher or the office and will be explained on Parent Curriculum Night.

Homework Guidelines

The purpose of homework is to provide students the opportunity for meaningful practice, application, and extension of acquired knowledge. Occasionally, homework will be assigned in Kindergarten. The volume of homework will increase as students' progress into the upper grade levels. Most often, students will receive class time to work on these assignments. At times, students will bring unfinished work home to complete. Students may bring unfinished assignments home because they required additional time to complete the work or they did not use their class time wisely.

If a student is sick, any assignments they miss should still be turned in to the teacher. The student will have the same number of days to turn in the work as they were out sick. If the student is out on the day of a test or the day a project is due, arrangements should be made with the teacher.

Homework Responsibilities

Successful homework completion is the joint responsibility of students, teachers, and parents. The responsibilities of each party are described below:

Student Responsibilities

- Students are personally responsible for the timely completion of all homework assignments, including those missed due to absence from class.
- Students are expected to listen carefully, follow directions for all assignments, and record them in their assignment notebooks. Students are responsible for bringing home all necessary materials.
- Students should plan ahead, use time efficiently, and work consistently on long-range assignments.
- Students should complete assignments in a distraction-free environment.
- Students should speak with teachers and parents if there is a consistent homework completion problem.
- Students should be an equal participant in group projects.

- Students are expected to produce quality work which reflects their personal best on all assignments.

Teacher Responsibilities

- The scheduling of homework which includes written work, projects, and studying for tests and quizzes,
- Ensuring students have a clear understanding of the daily assignments
- Communicated among teachers at each grade level.

PE Uniforms

Students in grades 5-8 must wear appropriate gym shoes (non-black soled shoes) and clothing which allows for proper activity. Procedures for students wishing to change before or after class will be presented by the 5th through 8th grade and PE teachers at the beginning of the school year. Students may use personal hygiene products (deodorant) that do not interfere with the classroom environment. Students in grades K-4 need to bring gym shoes (non-black soled shoes) to change into for PE class.

Academic Intervention and Special Programs

PCCS uses a Response to Intervention (RtI), now also known as a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) to match intervention strategies and supports for those students who need additional instruction in the areas of reading, math and behavior.

RtI/MTSS has three important parts:

1. A multi-tiered system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and interventions;
2. Using a problem solving method of decision making at each tier, and
3. Use data to inform instruction at each tier.

MTSS Procedures

What is MTSS?

The Illinois State Board of Education states: RtI/MTSS is a multi-level framework to maximize student achievement by providing support to students at-risk for poor learning outcomes. This approach includes:

- Core instruction for all students
- Increasingly intensive instructional interventions for students who need extra help (tiered system of intervention and systematic problem solving)
- Progress monitoring (data monitoring and analysis)

Why Use MTSS?

- MTSS enables educators to target instructional interventions to children's specific areas of need as soon as those needs become apparent.
- Formerly, the education system waited for a student to fail before attempting more intensive instructional interventions.
- Current research demonstrates that early intervention is crucial to a student's success.
- It allows special and general educators to share responsibilities for educating all students.
- It creates a uniform educational system that focuses on the success of all learners.
- It provides a process that identifies struggling learners early.
- It provides data to assist educators in making educational decisions and provides support for those decisions.

Universal Screening

In the spring of each school year the IAR is administered to all 3-8th grade students. Information obtained from this assessment delineates if students are below, have met, or have exceeded state standards at the grade level assessed. Universal academic screenings are given to all students three times a year (fall/winter/spring) to determine if individual students are making expected progress in the areas of reading and math. A universal social-emotional screening tool is utilized twice per year (fall and winter) to identify students who are at-risk for behavioral and/or social-emotional issues and to inform intervention. The assessments given are listed below:

- K-1: aimswebPLUS Early Numeracy & Early Literacy
- 2-5: aimswebPLUS Reading CBM
- 2-5: aimswebPLUS M-Comp (Math Computation)
- 2-5: aimswebPLUS M-CAP (Math Concepts & Applications)
- 2-8: NWEA/MAPS
- K-6: Fountas & Pinnell (As needed)
- K-4: BESS Social-Emotional Screener, Teacher Report
- 5-8: BESS Social-Emotional Screener, Student Self-Report

Upon completion of the universal screening administration, the assessment data is examined by the MTSS Data Team and Grade Bands. Data is examined to determine each student's attainment and/or progress toward grade level benchmarks.

Review of Data

Students who have not met grade level academic benchmarks are identified during RtI Team data review. If one or more assessment indicators (IAR, NWEA/MAPS, F&P, and aimswebPLUS) are below benchmark, a student is identified as needing additional diagnostic assessments. For students below set benchmarks (e.g., below set norms on aimswebPLUS CBMs, or below the 35th percentile on the NWEA in the content area of reading and/or math), additional assessments are administered/reviewed in decision-making. Depending on grade level, the following assessments/tools are utilized:

- Reading: Fountas & Pinnell instructional level, phonemic awareness level, spelling and writing levels, additional CBMs including early literacy and reading measures, previous year's IAR score
- Math: In-class beginning of the unit assessment, grade level math assessment, additional CBMs including math calculation and problem-solving skills, previous year's IAR score

Students who display elevated difficulties with internalizing or externalizing social-emotional functioning are identified during MTSS Core Committee data review. If there is an elevation on the screening, a student is identified as needing additional diagnostic assessments which may include: Additional review of BESS, teacher and parent reports and consultation, Student Support Team (SST) consultation, classroom observations.

Match Intervention & Instructional Needs

Following data review by the MTSS Core Committee and Grade Bands, students identified as likely to benefit from additional support are matched to intervention and resources and parents are notified. Parents of students who are identified as needing Tier 2 or 3 intervention for academic support will be notified by the classroom teacher, RtI Team, or interventionist. Parents of students who are identified as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions for behavioral support will be

notified by the classroom teacher, social worker, school psychologist, or Director of Special Education & Student Services.

Tiers of Academic Support

Tier 1	Students meeting benchmark scores are not eligible to receive additional services and are instructed in the core curriculum.
Tier 2 & Tier 3	Students are determined eligible for Tier 2 and Tier 3 based on data collected from universal screening assessments and additional assessments as needed. Students determined eligible receive instruction in the core curriculum along with additional small group instruction either within or outside of their classroom, with their classroom teacher, a trained instructional assistant, or with a reading interventionist (tutor).

Tiers of Behavioral Support

Tier 1	CARES matrix and cool tools, regular whole-class lessons with social worker/school psychologist to reinforce behavioral expectations and build positive relationships.
Tier 2	Check-in/Check-out (CICO) based on a school-wide matrix of behavioral expectations, small groups of students linked with staff members for morning and afternoon checks.
Tier 3	Modified/individualized CICO, participation in a social-academic instructional group (SAIG), social work/counseling, functional behavioral assessment (FBA), mentoring, and/or case study evaluation.

Title I/Intervention Services - “Scholars”

Remedial programs are designed for those students who are “at risk” of not meeting state standards in the content areas of Reading and Math. Benchmarks for tutorial programs at PCCS have been set with this in mind. The district uses the national norms provided by each assessment as a source for setting benchmarks, except for the IAR, which is a criterion-referenced test, and benchmarks are set by state standards. Tutoring programs are grant funded. Services available to students may differ yearly due to available funds and students’ needs.

Important points to note:

- PCCS students needing assistance are identified as early as possible in a student’s academic career.
- Teachers are provided with training opportunities as needed to assist students identified as “at risk.”
- Research-based strategies/interventions are provided within the regular classroom and when appropriate more intensively outside of the regular classroom.
- Research shows early identification and intervention are key to improving later student success.

Who qualifies for Title I/Intervention services?

Varieties of indicators are examined to identify students “at-risk” of not meeting standards in the areas of math and reading (both state and district). Students who are identified as “at-risk” of not meeting yearly grade level benchmarks/standards may qualify for Tier 2/3 interventions. The following indicators assist teachers in identifying students who are not meeting academic standards and who may qualify for Tutoring services.

Grades K-5

Students not meeting district benchmarks and who are identified as “Some Risk” or “At Risk” on the curriculum-based measurement (CBM) benchmarking assessments are identified for further assessment. Students not meeting grade level expectations on the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessment are identified for further review/assessment.

Grades 2-8

NWEA/MAP testing is given in the fall, winter and spring of each year. RIT Scores are reviewed and any student who is one grade level below their current grade level; or anyone below the 35th percentile is identified for further assessment. Students not meeting grade level expectations on the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessment are identified for further review/assessment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

[Education of Children With Disabilities-504 Procedures](#) is used for the identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of services to children with disabilities who are found eligible due to having a disability that impacts a major life activity requiring accommodations and/or services in alignment with [BOE Policy 600.3](#). Section 504 protects disabled persons from discrimination based on their disability status.

Definition:

A. A person is disabled within the meaning of Section 504 if they:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities,
2. has a record of such impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

Major life activities include functions such as: caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks (gross and fine motor, manual dexterity), walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and learning.

B. A qualified disabled person for public school services is a disabled person if they are:

1. of an age during which non-disabled persons are provided such educational services
2. of an age by which it is mandatory under law to provide such services to disabled persons (ages 3-21), and
3. Who qualifies as having a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Special Education Procedures

[Education of Children With Disabilities-IDEA Procedures](#) is used for the identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of services to children with disabilities who are found eligible and entitled to services as provided in the Illinois State Board of Education’s Special Education rules and [BOE Policy 600.3](#). If you have questions please contact the Director of Student Services and Special Education.

PCCS Special Education Behavioral Interventions Policy

[PCCS Special Education Behavioral Interventions Procedure](#) is available to all families with students who currently have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This communication is in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education Policy on Behavioral Interventions and [BOE Policy 500.45](#). If you have questions please contact the Director of Student Services and Special Education.

Internet and Electronics Usage

PCCS provides computer, network services and internet access for students' educational use. This provides significant benefits for learning but also poses some risks. We cannot guarantee that your child might not access material on the internet that you consider inappropriate. To help our teachers make your child's technology experiences as safe and productive as possible, please read and discuss with your child the following rules:

1. I will use the internet only for educational purposes and only under the direct supervision of my teacher.
2. I will use software and other instructional materials only for educational purposes.
3. I will only use legal software. Legal software includes applications licensed by PCCS; internet services and disks, CD-ROMs, and DVDs purchased by PCCS.
4. I will not bring software from home nor download any software from the internet.
5. I will not intentionally cause damage to PCCS computers or networks by any physical or electronic means such as intentionally introducing viruses.
6. I will not access files or services for which I am not an approved user.
7. I will not hack any computer or network.
8. I will not use PCCS computers or networks to commit any illegal act.
9. Computer and internet usage is a privilege, not a right, and as such, may be denied at any time.
10. A signed internet usage agreement form to be signed by parent/guardian and student must be returned to the office.

Google Apps For Education (GAPE)

Prairie Crossing Charter School will provide 5th through 8th grade students with Google Apps for Education accounts. Google Apps for Education includes free, web-based programs like email, document creation tools, shared calendars, and collaboration tools. This service is available through an agreement between Google and Prairie Crossing Charter School.

Google Apps for Education runs on an Internet domain purchased and owned by the school and is intended for educational use. Your student's teachers will be using Google Apps for lessons, assignments, and communication. Google Apps for Education is also available at home, the library, or anywhere with Internet access. School staff will monitor student use of Apps when students are at school. Parents are responsible for monitoring their child's use of Apps when accessing programs from home. Students are responsible for their own behavior at all times.

Chromebook Program (5th-8th Grades only)

Prairie Crossing Charter School prepares each student to appreciate the role of technology in academic and everyday life. To do so, the District will provide innovative learning experiences,

tools, and an environmental context to help students become skillful problem solvers who respond critically, resourcefully, and as environmental stewards to real-life challenges.

Prairie Crossing Charter School will purchase laptops for student use in grades 5-8. These students will be given responsibility for and expected to maintain this laptop for daily classroom experiences. The Chromebooks are considered school property and may be searched when in accordance with the Bullying Policy, [Board Policy 500.14 in Preventing Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment](#). Students will adhere to the Acceptable Use Procedure.

At Prairie Crossing Charter School, we will use our devices to provide:

- Blended Learning experiences
- Increased Student Involvement
- Collaborative Communication Processes

Violation of the Acceptable Use Procedure

Failure to follow the [Acceptable Use Procedures](#) found in the [PCCS 1:1 Chromebook Handbook](#) in accordance with Board of Directors' [Policy # 600.8.10 Computer Network and Internet Safety](#), may result in loss of this privilege, or disciplinary action. Network privileges can be revoked due to a result of inappropriate use. PCCS Technology Department may suspend or close the Students account if inappropriate activity has been detected.

Environmental Commitment

The environment is at the center of everything we do. We develop a curriculum that puts experiencing the natural world and learning about the environment at the forefront of student education. Our classes utilize the natural areas surrounding the school as classrooms, and we incorporate many off-site educational experiences into our curriculum.

Outdoor Experiences

Many outdoor experiences involve walking community trails. These experiences happen on a daily basis at PCCS and families will not necessarily be notified in advance. Students are expected to come prepared to learn outside every day.

Field Trips

Field trips provide us with the opportunity to learn from valuable resources that are outside our immediate area. They allow students to have hands-on experiences with people and places that greatly enhance our curriculum. Parents are asked to sign a field trip permission form at the beginning of the year for all field trips throughout the year. A notice is sent home before each field trip describing the trip. Each family is asked to pay an instructional fee at the beginning of the year. This fee does not cover the cost of field trips. Parents will be asked to pay for field trips as they arise throughout the year.

Overnight Trips

Beginning in 5th grade, classes attend overnight trips. These trips are an important part of the educational experience at PCCS. On the trips, students are immersed in new environments. They have the opportunity to experience, hands-on, places and activities that couldn't be contained within the course of a day at school or a single-day field trip. Trips are also invaluable to the emotional and social development of our students. Overnight trips require

additional forms, and these will be distributed prior to the trip, along with detailed information on the trip's purpose, destination and logistics.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the work they complete on trips. The assignments and activities will appear as part of the students' grades in the appropriate subject area(s).

Fees and payment

The cost of overnight trips includes lodging, transportation, some meals (as explained in specific trip information packets), tuition or payment for facilities rented/visited and other equipment used by students on the trips. The cost per student is determined by dividing the total trip cost equally among the participants. Prior to determining the cost, families will be asked to return a trip commitment form with a deposit to ensure that we have an accurate count of students intending to attend the trips. The remainder of the fees will be collected prior to the trip departure. All trip payments are non-refundable.

If a Student Chooses Not to Attend

We hope that all students can attend our overnight trips, as they are an important part of the curriculum. However, because they require time outside of the normal school day, we understand that a student may not be able to attend every trip.

Students that do not attend trips are still expected to attend school (unless their non-attendance is due to illness or another circumstance which would require them to miss school if the class were not on a trip). Absences from school will be categorized as unexcused based on the criteria described in the "absences" section below. Students will be placed in another classroom, where they will work on assignments designed to impart similar content as students will learn on the trip. Alternate assignments will be related to the trip, meeting the same learning goals. They will be graded and those grades will be entered in place of the assignments completed by students who attended the trip.

Loss of Privilege to Attend a Trip

Prairie Crossing Charter School may choose not to allow a student to attend a trip if the safety of that student or other students is at risk. This decision will be made at the discretion of the administration and in accordance with the school's discipline policy and procedures. Families will be included in discussions regarding these decisions. [Trip/Camping Contract](#)

Trip Chaperones

Day and overnight trips may require parent chaperones to make for a successful trip. A communication will be sent home asking for volunteers if needed. Please understand that while we appreciate all of our parent volunteers, not all volunteers may be needed for a given trip. Classroom teachers will have the final determination regarding all chaperones. If you are selected as a chaperone, teachers will provide you with a list of [guidelines/responsibilities](#) and paperwork that will need to be completed. If you are not selected as a trip chaperone, we cannot allow you to attend the trip even if you provide your own transportation and pay your own fees. We will try to involve as many parents as we can on field trips throughout the year.

Outdoor Apparel

Students will dress appropriately for the weather as we go outside every day, if possible. In general, it is a good idea to have layers at school, as the weather changes throughout the day. See the school dress code for more information.

Winter weather temperatures combined with wind can be quite harsh. As part of the educational process and learning experience, students are expected to go outside at recess under most conditions. In the winter, children should dress warmly and wear boots, snow pants, warm jackets, hats and mittens/gloves. It is advisable to store hats/gloves in students' lockers before winter sets in so that they are available on cold days. When children wear proper winter apparel and winter conditions are appropriate, children enjoy recess outside for approximately thirty minutes.

The administration will limit outdoor activities when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued Wind Chill Advisories and Wind Chill Warnings.

1. During a NWS Wind Chill Advisory (expected to fall below 0F) the students will not be allowed recreational outdoor activity. The students will be limited to no more than fifteen (15) minutes for any outdoor learning activity.
2. If the temperature is below -20F, all learning and recreational activities will be indoors.

Warmer weather temperatures are ideal for outdoor activities. Still, it is important to prepare for outdoor activities. It is a good idea to apply a layer of sunscreen and bug repellent prior to the start of each school day when outdoor activities are allowed. Students are encouraged to bring sunscreen to school, and may also choose to bring insect repellent. Both sunscreen and insect repellent should be topical-only (no aerosolized products) and fragrance-free. Please note, staff cannot apply these products to your child(ren). Additionally, PCCS will not have a supply of products for those who do not bring their own, and children cannot share theirs. Students should also have a reusable water bottle to carry outside on warm weather days.

Finally, students should have rain gear stored in their locker and left there for rainy days. In the event of thunder/lightning, students will not go outside; however, steady rain will not cause cancellation of outdoor activities. Due to safety issues, students are not allowed to carry umbrellas once on campus. Recommended rain gear includes a good rain jacket (that can layer over a warm jacket in the event of cold rain), rain pants, and rubber boots.

Water and Ice Activities

Students are involved in a variety of outdoor activities including hikes, farm activities, and more. Many physical education activities also take place outside. Activities in which students will be in water (e.g. a stream or lake) or on ice will follow specific guidelines.

1. Students will be permitted in water or on ice only for educational purposes. This includes any purpose, which falls within the curriculum, including for physical education class. They will not be permitted in water or on ice for recess.
2. Parents will be notified of the ice activities in advance and be given an option to opt out of the ice activity.
3. Students will not be allowed to swim unless a certified lifeguard is present. Parents will be informed in advance if this opportunity arises.
4. Students may wade in water in situations deemed safe by staff. Students will not be allowed to go deeper than their knees in a wading experience.

Student Performance Standards

Promotion and Retention

Prairie Crossing Charter School wants all students to succeed. If student progress has not met certain standards, they may be held back so that they can achieve success before advancing to the next grade level. The decision to retain a student will be a joint decision with the teachers, administration, other support staff, and the family working toward a solution that is best for the individual student's needs.

Academic Warning Status

Academic Warning Status applies to students in grades 5-8. With academic concerns for students in grades K-4, teachers will meet individually with parents to determine a resolution.

A 5-8 student will be placed on Academic Warning Status when they fail 2 or more subjects during any trimester. Once on academic warning, teams will work in cooperation with the student and parents/guardians to implement an appropriate intervention plan to help insure future academic success. Students on academic warning will stay in for academic recess. In addition, they may be ineligible to participate in special events and activities and extracurricular activities, so they can continue to work on improving their grades. Examples include, but are not limited to, field days, non-educational activities like sledding, classroom cook-outs, kickball games and others. This time, instead, will be used to complete missing work and catch up on their studies. Teachers and the Dean will determine the reinstatement of privileges based on the student's academic performance.

Conduct and Discipline

CARES - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Prairie Crossing Charter School has long been a Platinum-Level PBIS school. This nationally recognized program is a positive, proactive program which puts common behavior policies in place in all areas of the school. When all students are knowledgeable of the expectations, they usually respond as directed. PCCS staff teaches specific behavioral expectations to our students. We put in place a system of tiered interventions to reinforce good choices and constructively redirect negative choices. Our goal is to provide a safe and happy place for our students to learn. [CARES Matrix](#)

Athletic Code of Conduct

Participation in an extracurricular athletic activity is a privilege granted to students by parents, faculty and staff. All students are eligible based on the grade level of the activity. Students are expected to:

- Maintain a C average in all classes (including Essentials)- Students are not allowed to participate until the grade(s) are at a "C" average.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship and attitude during practice, rehearsal, games, events and competitions
- Give priority to the school's team over teams outside of school
- Follow the rules of the adult supervisor at all times
- Must attend school the entire day of a game, event, competition or club activity
- Must attend school on the last day prior to weekend game, event, competition or club activity. Coaches, teachers, and supervisors are responsible for letting athletes and parents know about ineligibility.

Discipline

Discipline Policy

The goal of discipline at PCCS is to develop respect, self-discipline and responsibility in each student. Teachers, Instructional Assistants and Administrators shall maintain discipline in the school in order to keep students safe, protect the school's staff, and students' property and provide an atmosphere conducive to learning; discipline is primarily conducted by engaging students in purposeful activities. When disciplinary action is taken, it is designed to be restorative and corrective rather than punitive and aims to elicit future cooperation from the student. Every effort is made to see that the student understands the reasons for correction and the purpose of the measures taken. At our school, we abide by the following basic principles:

Respect yourself, other students and adults.

1. Look and listen when others are talking.
2. Follow directions and work to the best of your ability.
3. Work quietly so that others may also work.
4. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
5. Respect your own belongings, others belongings and school property.
6. Refrain from any activity that may be dangerous.

Take responsibility for your actions.

1. Apologize to people who you have hurt or offended.
2. Correct your behavior.
3. Engage in problem solving to resolve the situation.
4. Take appropriate steps to resolve conflict. This may include seeking a staff member to help in the situation.
5. Accept consequences from staff.

Be Safe.

1. Walk in the buildings.
2. Be aware of others, especially at recess.

Infractions

Prairie Crossing Charter School uses a restorative approach to discipline. Behavior infractions will be addressed at the appropriate level according to the frequency and severity of the behavior. All disciplinary actions will include a restorative action.

Minor Infraction: Consequences will include a verbal warning, temporary removal from class or activity, change in class assignment, writing a letter to parents explaining the student's conduct and the consequences (parents must respond in writing by the next school day), formal notification of parents by school staff. Talk with principal, and/or loss of privileges (e.g., lunch with class).

Serious Infraction: Consequences include detention, removal from class, seizure of contraband, talk with principal notification of parental by school staff, loss of privileges (e.g. lunch with class), suspension, and/or reports to law enforcement officials.

Major Infraction: Consequences include removal from class, seizure of contraband, loss of privileges, suspension, and/or expulsion. All major infractions must be reported to the administration. Reports to law enforcement officials will be made.

Prohibited Behavior

Disciplinary action may be taken against any student guilty of misconduct, which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the infractions listed in the table below. Disciplinary action may be taken whenever the student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities including, but not limited to conduct occurring: on school grounds before, during, or after school hours and at any other time when a school group is using the school, off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or, anywhere if the conduct may reasonably be construed by school authorities to create substantial injury or disruption or material interference with school-related activities or the rights or risks of other students or school personnel.

Weapons

In accordance with *School Code*, a student who possesses, uses, controls or transfers a weapon, or any other object that can reasonably be considered or looks like a weapon shall be expelled for at least one calendar year. The expulsion period may, however, be modified by the Executive Director subject to further modification by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis. In no case may the expulsion exceed two calendar years. A weapon means any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon or firearm defined by federal or State law, knife, brass knuckle, billy club, or any other object if used or attempted or intended to be used to cause bodily harm as well as look-alikes of any weapon as defined here. Other items such as, but not limited to, baseball bats, pipes, bottles, locks, sticks, pencils, pens, and scissors may be considered weapons if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm.

No Weapons or Concealed Carry Allowed on School Property are allowed on School property unless authorized.

Bullying

Procedures for Students At Risk for Aggressive Behaviors and Bullying

PCCS will follow our [Board Policy 500.14 in Preventing Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment](#).

Bully Hotline: 847-986-3504

Complaint Manager:

Executive Director

Prairie Crossing Charter School

1531 Jones Point Road, Grayslake, IL

PCCS will utilize CARES with all students kindergarten thru 8th grade. CARES promotes a safe and caring environment in which students grow and learn. We will have a certified trainer on staff to work with both teachers and students.

1. **Bullying - Definition.** ([105 ILCS 5/27-23.7](#)) For purposes of this Policy, "bullying" shall be defined as physical, verbal, or by the use of technology (Cyber Bullying) conduct, by one or more students, which serves to harass, demean, humiliate, abuse, victimize, deny, or exclude one or more students of PCCS, or any other school or school district, from or in connection with the pursuit of, participation in, and/or enjoyment of any

program or activity, including academic and non-academic classes and extracurricular activities, offered or sponsored by PCCS or in any facility operated by the Board of Directors. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, direct behaviors (e.g., teasing, taunting, intimidating, threatening, name-calling, ridiculing, belittling, extorting, hitting, physical attacks and/or violence) and indirect behaviors (e.g., spreading rumors, causing social or psychological isolation).

2. **Bullying - Discipline.** Bullying shall be construed as gross disobedience or misconduct and a major infraction under this Policy that may subject a student to suspension or expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement. In the incident of Bullying, the offending student may be placed on a [Bully Prevention/Intervention Plan](#).
3. **Development of Procedures for Students At Risk for Aggressive Behaviors and/or Bullying.** The Board of Directors authorizes the Administrative Team to develop procedures, which address the needs of students who engage in conduct that demonstrates that they are at risk for aggressive behaviors including, but not limited to, bullying. The Administrative Team is additionally directed to identify available community-based and/or PCCS resources which may provide appropriate early intervention for such conduct.

The procedures developed shall include the provision of written notice to the parents/legal guardians of such students regarding the following:

- A. A description of the conduct that demonstrates that a student is at risk for aggressive behaviors; and
- B. A description of the available community-based and/or PCCS resources which may provide appropriate early intervention for such conduct.

Insubordination/Disrespect

Insubordination or Noncompliance is the failure/refusal to respond to or carry out a reasonable request by authorized school personnel. Disrespect is to call any member of the school or district staff derogatory names, dishonor, or abuse verbally or in writing; disregard for authority; uncooperative behavior (e.g. swearing at a staff member); abuse or defile any school, staff, or student property. Disciplinary action may be taken against any student or students guilty of insubordination or disrespect, which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the infractions listed in the table below.

Dangerous Behaviors

If any student behaves in a way that is dangerous for themselves or others, the school's first priority must be to deal with that danger and keep everyone safe. Dangerous behaviors include but are not limited to intentional throwing of objects with malice, assault, arson, verbal threat to cause harm to other students or faculty. Disciplinary action may be taken against any student or students guilty of misconduct, which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the infractions listed in the table below.

Gangs and Gang-Related Activities

Student involvement in gangs or gang-related activities, including but not limited to the display of gang symbols or paraphernalia, is strictly prohibited. Students who are involved in gangs or gang-related activities shall be subject to suspension or expulsion, and shall be reported to law

enforcement. The term “gang” means any group of two or more persons whose purposes include committing or conspiring to commit criminal offenses; engaging in conduct that is contrary to the public good; or engaging in conduct that interferes with, or disrupts, the district's educational process or programs. Gang-related activity means any act or omission in furtherance of any gang or gang activity.

Required Notices

A school staff member shall immediately notify the Administration in the event that they (1) observes any person in possession of a firearm on or around school grounds unless immediate notice would endanger students under their supervision; (2) observes or has reason to suspect that any person on school grounds is or was involved in a drug-related incident; or (3) observes a battery committed against any staff member/student. (Upon receiving such a report, the Administrative Team, or their designee shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency, Illinois State Police, and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). The Executive Director shall also advise the parent community of any serious legitimate threat to the security of the school environment as provided in the school's Building Security Policy.

Delegation of Authority

Each teacher, assistant, and other person whose duties include the supervision of students, is authorized to impose any disciplinary measure, other than suspension or expulsion, which is appropriate and in accordance with the policies and rules on student discipline. Teachers may remove students from a classroom for disruptive behavior. A school staff member shall immediately notify the Dean in the event that they observe a student committing a serious or major infraction as defined above.

Corporal punishment shall not be used. Corporal punishment is defined as slapping, paddling, prolonged maintenance of students in physically painful positions, or intentional infliction of bodily harm. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or the defense of property. Teachers, assistants, and other persons providing a related service for or with respect to a student, may use reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

Volunteers in the school may not give a verbal warning to students. If any type of warning or disciplinary action is needed, the volunteer will notify a teacher, assistant, or other person providing a related service for or with respect to a student. Volunteers may give warnings to students engaged in activities that are deemed dangerous to that student or others around them. This warning should direct the student to stop engaging in the activity they are involved in. The volunteer should report this incident to the teacher assistant or any other person providing a related service for or with respect to a student.

The Dean may suspend students guilty of serious or major infractions up to 10 consecutive school days provided the appropriate procedures are followed. Students may not attend any school functions during a period of suspension. The Board of Directors may suspend a student for a period of time in excess of 10 days. The Board of Directors may also expel students guilty of major infractions provided appropriate procedures are followed.

Suspension Procedures

Before suspension, the student shall be provided a conference during which the charges will be explained and the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the charges. A pre-suspension conference is not required and the student can be immediately suspended when the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process. In such cases, the notice and conference shall follow as soon as practicable.

Any suspension shall be reported immediately to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). A written notice of the suspension shall contain a statement of the reasons for the suspension and a notice to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of their right to review the suspension. Also, a copy of the notice shall be given to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

Upon written request of the parent(s) or guardian(s), a review of the suspension shall be conducted in closed session by the Board of Directors or a hearing officer appointed by the Board. Requests should be directed to the **President of the Board, Prairie Crossing Charter School, 1531 Jones Point Road, Grayslake, IL 60030**. At the review, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may appear and discuss the suspension with the Board or its designee and may be represented by counsel. After presentation of the evidence or receipt of the designee's report, the Board shall take such action as it finds appropriate.

Expulsion Procedures

Before expulsion, the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be provided written notice of the time, place, and purpose of a hearing by registered or certified mail requesting the appearance of the parent(s) or guardian(s). The Board of Directors shall conduct the hearing in closed session or by its designee. If a designee is appointed by the Board, they shall report to the Board the evidence presented at the hearing and the Board shall take such final action as it finds appropriate.

During the expulsion hearing, the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) may be represented by counsel, present witnesses and other evidence, and cross-examine witnesses. At the expulsion hearing, the Board or designee shall hear evidence of whether the student is guilty of the major infraction as charged, after presentation of the evidence or receipt of its designee's report; the Board shall decide the issue of guilt and take such action as it finds appropriate.

Disciplinary Measures

All Disciplinary Measures Will Include a Restorative Action

Minor Infractions	Serious Infractions	Major Infractions
Consequences may include verbal warning, temporary removal from class or activity, change in class assignment, writing a letter to parents explaining the student’s conduct and the consequences (parents must respond in writing by the next school day), formal notification of parents by school staff. Talk with principal, and/or loss of privileges (e.g., lunch with class).	Consequences include detention, removal from class, seizure of contraband, talk with principal notification of parental by school staff, loss of privileges (e.g. lunch with class), suspension, and/or reports to law enforcement officials.	Consequences include removal from class, seizure of contraband, loss of privileges, suspension, and/or expulsion. All major infractions must be reported to the administration. Reports to law enforcement officials will be made.
Tardiness	Repeated minor infractions.	False fire alarm, tampering with apparatus.
Inappropriate dress (see Student Dress Policy).	Plagiarism, cheating, forgery, academic dishonesty	Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco materials, alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, “look-alike” drugs, or drug paraphernalia. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing or selling over the counter or prescription medication not approved by the office. Students who are under the influence of a prohibited substance will be treated as though they had drugs in their possession.
Inappropriate public displays of affection.	Vandalism, defacing or destruction of personal or school property. Misuse of bathrooms will not be tolerated.	Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon, as defined in this Policy
Disrespect of others and their property.	Pushing, shoving, kicking, antagonistic or similar behavior with the intent to cause harm. May report repeated infractions to law enforcement officials.	Using any form or type of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to someone else and/or urging other students to engage in such conduct. Prohibited aggressive behavior includes, without limitation, the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, bullying, hazing, harassment of any kind, gang activity of any kind, or other comparable conduct. Bullying - Bully Intervention Plan
Teasing, name calling	Leaving school grounds without permission.	Bomb threat Arson

Written or verbal vulgar or profane language toward a peer.	Possession of inappropriate written, visual or audio materials or use of the Internet to find or distribute such materials.	Being a member of or joining or promising to join, or becoming pledged to become a member of any public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society.
Use of prohibited electronic equipment or failure to have it turned off during school hours.	Failure to attend school without valid cause.	Engaging in any activity, on or off campus that poses a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or school property, (b) constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or (c) is disruptive to the school environment.
Failure to follow classroom rules	Theft or possession of stolen property	Involvement in gangs or gang-related activities, including the display of gang symbols or paraphernalia.
	Defiance of authority or disobeying directives. Insubordination.	Violating any criminal law, such as assault and battery, arson, theft, gambling, and hazing.
	Written or verbal vulgar or profane language toward a staff member.	Misusing any substance in the manner of a controlled substance by intentionally breathing the substances' gas or vapors for the purpose of reaching or feeling a high sensation, or causing or facilitation with another person in similarly misusing such substances.
		Repeated minor and/or serious infractions.

CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute)

CPI is a behavior management program with a focus on prevention. Our staff that are trained in CPI are trained with proven strategies for safely diffusing anxious, hostile, or violent behavior at the earliest possible stage. If/when one of our students is displaying behavior that we judge to be harmful to themselves or others, our trained staff may intervene using CPI strategies and techniques. For more information on CPI, please refer to [their website](#)

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Misconduct by Students with Disabilities Procedure This communication is in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education Policy on Behavioral Interventions and [BOE Policy 500.45](#). If you have questions please contact the Director of Student Services and Special Education.

Sexual Harassment

PCCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or pregnancy in programs or activities run or supported by Prairie Crossing Charter School. In addition, Board policy prohibits sexual harassment or sexual intimidation of students by school employees, contractors, and students. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors,

and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or employment environment.

The terms intimidating, hostile, and offensive include conduct which has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities.

Students or staff who believe they are victims of sexual harassment or have witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to discuss the matter with a member of the Administrative Team.

Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same gender. If a member of the Administrative Team is of the same gender, a student of the opposite gender may choose to report to a teacher that is of the same gender. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Complaints should be filed in accordance with the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

An allegation that one student was sexually harassed by another student shall be referred to the member of the PCCS Administrative Team for appropriate action.

The Executive Director and/or member of the Administrative Team designee shall also use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students that the district will not tolerate sexual harassment by including this policy in the appropriate handbooks.

Any district employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. In the event that the offending employee is not terminated, the school will monitor the behavior of the individual for a reasonable period of time. Additionally, periodic private inquiries will be made of the employee found to have harassed in an effort to prevent any recurrence of the offending behavior or conduct. The school will maintain a written record of the complaint, investigation, and its resolution.

Any student of the district who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with the discipline policy. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding sexual harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge with regard to employees, or suspension and/or expulsion with regard to students.

Uniform Grievance Procedure

SECTION A.

If any student, parent/guardian, or employee, or any member of the public, believes that they have been the victim of unlawful discrimination, including harassment, by a member of the Board, one of its employees, agents or students, such individual (hereinafter "the

Complainant”) may file a complaint with the Complaint Coordinator pursuant to this Grievance Procedure. A complaint is appropriate for resolution through this Grievance Procedure if it alleges discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, age (personnel only), sex, physical or mental disability (personnel only), actual or potential marital or parental status, unfavorable military discharge (personnel only), or other legally protected group status.

SECTION B. Complaint Coordinator

1. The Complaint Coordinator is the Executive Director, 1531 Jones Point Road, Grayslake, Illinois 60030-3536, 847-543-9722.
2. In the event that the Complaint Coordinator is the individual accused of discrimination or harassment, the complainant may file their complaint with the President of the Board who may appoint an independent Complaint Coordinator to resolve the complaint.
3. At the Executive Director’s and/or Complaint Coordinator’s discretion, an independent Complaint Coordinator may be appointed to resolve any complaint. An independent Complaint Coordinator shall have all of the same rights and responsibilities as the Complaint Coordinator, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Director.
4. The Complaint Coordinator shall have the authority to consult with the Board’s legal counsel throughout the Grievance process.

SECTION C. Complaint Procedures

1. Filing a Complaint

- a. All complaints of discrimination or harassment should be filed with the Complaint Coordinator, in writing, as soon as practicable after the conduct complained of has occurred.
- b. If a complaint of harassment or discrimination, written or verbal, is brought to any employee other than the Complaint Coordinator, that employee shall immediately forward the complaint to the Complaint Coordinator.
- c. If a verbal complaint is brought to the Complaint Coordinator, the Complaint Coordinator shall interview the Complainant as soon as practicable after receiving the complaint. The Complaint Coordinator shall reduce the complaint to writing. The Complainant shall sign and date the written complaint.
- d. A complaint alleging discrimination or harassment should contain the following elements: the name(s) of the individual(s) involved and any witness(es); the date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the alleged conduct; a description of the incident(s); the date of submission of the complaint; and the signature of the Complainant.
- e. The substance of the complaint and the identity of the individuals involved shall remain confidential, except as required by law and/or this Grievance Procedure, and as necessary for the Complaint Coordinator to fully investigate and resolve the complaint.
- f. The Complaint Coordinator shall make every attempt to investigate and resolve any complaint brought pursuant to this Grievance Procedure within ten (10) school days after the complaint is filed.
- g. Nothing in this Grievance Procedure shall have the effect of limiting an individual’s right to pursue other avenues of relief provided for under State or federal laws relative to discrimination and/or harassment. Individuals wishing to file a

complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or Illinois Department of Human Rights may do so at the following addresses:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
500 West Madison Street- Suite 2800
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 353-2713

Illinois Department of Human Rights
100 West Randolph Street -Suite 10-100
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 814-6245

1. Informal Resolution

- a. At the Complaint Coordinator's discretion, they may first attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If attempts at informal resolution are not successful, a formal investigation shall be conducted as described in Paragraph 3 below
- b. If a complaint is resolved informally, a written summary of the resolution shall be prepared and maintained by the Complaint Coordinator. This summary shall be signed by the Complaint Coordinator, the Complainant and the accused individual(s).

2. Formal Investigation

- a. The Complaint Coordinator shall begin a formal investigation of the complaint immediately upon receiving it, or immediately upon determining that attempts at informal resolution, described in Paragraph 2 above, have not been successful.
- b. As part of the formal investigation, the Complaint Coordinator shall interview the Complainant and the accused individual(s), and may interview any other individual(s) having knowledge relative to the allegations of the complaint.
- c. The Complaint Coordinator shall make every attempt to complete the investigation, prepare a report concerning their findings, and provide a written response to the Complainant stating the disposition of the complaint, within ten (10) school days after the complaint is filed.
- d. If the Complaint Coordinator determines that the allegation(s) of discrimination or harassment are founded, the Complaint Coordinator, if other than the Executive Director shall forward a copy of their report to the Board President for a determination of the appropriate corrective action(s) to be taken. Appeal of any disciplinary action(s) taken against the accused, if any, pursuant to this Grievance Procedure shall be through established Board and/or contractual procedures.

SECTION D. Appeal to the Board

1. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the disposition of the complaint, they may file a written appeal with the Board within ten (10) school days after receiving the Complaint Coordinator's written response to the complaint.
2. The Board, or a subcommittee thereof, may, in its discretion, convene a hearing regarding the complaint and appeal.
3. Within thirty (30) school days after the filing of the appeal, the Board shall provide the Complainant with a written decision.

SECTION E. Appeals of Student Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment on the Basis of Disability

If the complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability, the procedures set forth in Sections C and D shall be applicable.

If the Complainant is a student and the complaint involves allegations relative to the evaluation, identification of, or services/placement offered or provided to them under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the following hearing and appeal procedures shall be applicable in lieu of the procedures set forth in Sections C - D herein:

1. Complaint Procedures
 - a. A complaint concerning the School's compliance with provisions of this Grievance Procedure with the exception of complaints from applicants for employment may be filed with the Coordinator.
 - b. The complaint must be in writing, signed and dated by the complainant (or, in the case of a student, their parent or guardian). It must include a description of the facts and circumstances of the complaint, as well as a description of the relief being sought. The Coordinator shall be available to provide assistance to the complainant as needed in the preparation and processing of the complaint and in the review procedures. A complaint form shall be available in each school and at the School office.
 - c. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Coordinator shall promptly (i) provide the complainant with a copy of this Grievance Procedure and (ii) conduct an investigation, including, but not limited to, interviews with employees and/or students and a review of all relevant documents. The Coordinator shall complete such investigation within ten (10) school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are extenuating circumstances which warrant an extension of this timeline.
 - d. The Coordinator shall confer with the complainant upon completion of such investigation to determine if the complaint may be resolved informally. If such informal resolution is not possible and the complainant wishes to proceed with a hearing, the Coordinator shall provide the complainant with a list of three (3) impartial hearing officers. The complainant shall indicate in writing their selection of an impartial hearing officer, in order of preference (with #1 being the most preferred and #3 being the least preferred). The complainant shall return the list of impartial hearing officers, with order of preference indicated in writing, to the Coordinator within five (5) school days of receipt of the list from the Coordinator.
 - e. The Coordinator shall, upon receipt of the complainant's selections, promptly notify the first choice hearing officer of the pending case. In the event that the first choice hearing officer cannot hear the case, the second choice officer shall be contacted. In the event that the second choice officer cannot hear the case, the Coordinator shall contact the complainant's third choice officer. If none of the officers contacted can hear the case, the complainant will be asked to select/prioritize three additional hearing officers from another list which will be provided by the Coordinator to the complainant within five (5) school days of the notice of decline from the third hearing officer.
 - f. A hearing shall be scheduled by the hearing officer within twenty (20) school days after the date that the hearing officer agrees to accept the appointment, unless the complainant and the Coordinator agree otherwise or there are extenuating circumstances which warrant an extension of this timeline.

- g. A hearing shall be scheduled by the hearing officer within twenty (20) school days after the date that the hearing officer agrees to accept the appointment, unless the complainant and the Coordinator agree otherwise or there are extenuating circumstances which warrant an extension of this timeline
- h. The School and the complainant shall have the right to present evidence relevant to the issue raised in the complaint. The parties shall have the right to be represented by counsel.
- i. The hearing officer shall limit their decision to the issue or issues presented by the complainant in the written complaint. The hearing officer's decision must be written and shall include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision. The decision is to be based solely on the hearing officer's interpretation of the meaning or application of Section 504 and/or the ADA.
- j. The hearing officer shall send a copy of the decision to the complainant and the School within five (5) school days after the conclusion of the hearing.
- k. The decision of the hearing officer shall be final unless appealed pursuant to subsection 2 below.

2. Review Procedures

Any party aggrieved by the decision of the hearing officer may file a request for review. The complainant's request for a review shall be in writing, signed and dated, and shall be filed by mail or personal service no later than thirty (30) school days after receipt of the hearing officer's decision. If the complainant is the appealing party, the request shall be submitted to the Coordinator; if the School is the appealing party, the request shall be submitted to the complainant by mail or personal service. A request for a review shall state that an appeal of the hearing decision is being requested, the reason for the request for review, and the relief being sought.

If the complainant is the appealing party, the Coordinator shall provide them a list of three (3) impartial review officers. The complainant shall indicate in writing their selection of an impartial review officer, in order of preference (with #1 being the most preferred and #3 being the least preferred). The complainant shall return the list of impartial review officers, with order of preference indicated in writing, to the Coordinator within five (5) school days of receipt of the list from the Coordinator. If the School is the appealing party, the Coordinator shall select from the list of impartial review officers as outlined in this subsection. Final selection of the impartial review officer and scheduling of a review hearing shall be the same as provided in Section D(1)(e) and (f) herein. The conduct of the review hearing and issuance of a decision shall be the same as provided in Section D(1)(g), (h), and (i) herein. The decision of the review officer shall be final.

Transportation/Carpool Procedures

In order for a carpool to run efficiently everyone must follow the same procedures. We encourage all families to join a carpool if possible – that option is the most time-efficient and environmentally-friendly.

Safety

Cell phones: Please remember that it is a state law that cell phones are **NOT** permitted to be used in school zones. We need your full attention on the children to assure their safety.

AM Drop – Off

Click here for the [AM Drop Off Route Map](#).

Entrance: Please use the Jones Point Road entrance into the Kennicott parking lot. Cars *may not* use Prairie Trail as an entrance or exit during AM or PM carpool. Please do not park or drop students off on bordering streets.

- Turn immediately right and form two lines and follow the road.
- Merge into a single line after the mailboxes. **NEVER** pass another car unless directed by Carpool Officials.
- Students may be dropped off in front of both the Carson and the Flagpole Carpool Area.
- Greeters will open car doors on the passenger side only to ensure your child's safety
- Students will proceed to Market Square until 7:55 am

You are welcome to park your car in the west parking lot and walk your child to morning recess in Market Square. There will be supervision on Market Square beginning at 7:40 am. At 7:55am children will line up and enter the building. Students who *arrive* after 8:00 am (8:05 for Comstock Building) will be considered tardy and will need to check in the office to receive a tardy pass. Continued Tardiness will result in disciplinary action for the student so please help your child arrive on time to school.

Please Note: At no time should driving families use Amos Bennett St. or Prairie Trail to drop students off for school. This creates a serious hazard to both walkers and those attempting to drop off. Drivers parked on Amos Bennet and Prairie Trail will be asked to use the regular Carpool lanes. Continued misuse of the carpool procedures will result in disciplinary action. The 1st instance will be a general warning and reminder of the procedure. The second and subsequent instances will result in the student being sent to the office and a request for a parent meeting to discuss options.

Kindergarten Pick-Up

Click here for the [Kindergarten PM Pick Up Route](#).

All Kindergarten students will be picked up in the Comstock Parking lot. On early release, Kindergarten pick up will take place in the Comstock with the rest of the student body. Allow extra time for pick-up.

PM Pick-Up

Click here for the [Grades 1-8 PM Pick Up Route](#).

For after school pick up, your carpool number should hang from your rearview mirror so that it is visible. Please do not drive around another car as this creates a safety hazard to parents, staff and students.

- Enter the Kennicott parking lot from Jones Point Road (by the office).
- Turn immediately right and form two lines and follow the road just like the morning drop off
- Merge into a single line after the mailboxes
- Turn right in front of Byron Colby Barn and follow the lane around to the Comstock Parking lot
- Pick up is to the east of the gym
- Staff members will open car doors on the passenger side only
- Exit onto Jones Point Road from Comstock Parking lot.

At the end of the school day, children will be called to their designated pick up place for dismissal. Cars need to stay in a line and children will be loaded into cars in the order in which the cars are lined up. Each driver should have their carpool number displayed on the passenger window. *Please help your child to memorize their carpool number.* If you wish to speak to a teacher, please call them after school. The carpool line is just too busy for meaningful parent-teacher communication. *The use of cell phones in the carpool line is prohibited.*

Note: Due to staff and student safety, if your child misses their number and does not arrive when your car is in the pick-up zone you will need to pull through and get back in line.

It is very important that your carpool and emergency contact information are complete and up-to-date on the enrollment form. If you are planning to have your child walk or ride their bike to school, please make note of this on the enrollment form. Students can only be released to adults listed on the enrollment form. If you wish to have another adult listed, please call the office. If your request for a particular adult is just for one day, send a note to the classroom teacher or notify the office by phone. Children must have a permission note in their hands to go with a person not designated on the carpool pick-up form.

Please Note: Carpool students will not be allowed to walk to cars parked and waiting on Amos Bennet or Prairie Trail. Students found walking to cars will be asked to return to campus and follow the proper carpool procedures. Drivers parked on Amos Bennet and Prairie Trail will be asked to use the regular Carpool lanes. Continued misuse of the carpool procedures will result in disciplinary action. The 1st instance will be a general warning and reminder of the procedure. The second and subsequent instances will result in the student being considered a carpool child and thus they will not be allowed to leave the building until "All Call" or their carpool number is called for dismissal. (3:45)

Early Pick-Up

If you have a special circumstance that would require your student to leave early or right at 3:30, special permission from the Dean is required. Once permission is obtained, please park in the center section of the Kennicott parking lot, sign out and pick up your child(ren) from the office. Early pick-ups can disrupt learning so please limit these requests.

Walkers/Bike Riders

Children who walk or bike to school may enter the school grounds either by crossing Jones Point Road near the Kennicott parking lot or at the corner of Amos Bennett Street and Prairie Trail. There will be a crossing guard present at each of these locations from 7:45 – 7:55 am each morning. **Walkers should not enter or Exit the property at the intersection of Amos Bennett and Market Street.** Bike racks will be set up on the southwest side of the Kennicott building. All bikes should be locked and on kickstands or in the bike rack. All bike riders are required to wear helmets. We will dismiss walkers and bike riders before we begin carpool to get students on their way before traffic starts. We ask all bikers and walkers to stay off the grass area between the Rachel Carson and the Anna B. Comstock Building. **When arriving and leaving, please walk on the sidewalk only.**

Dismissal with Alternate Supervision

Please remember to send in notes regarding play dates if your child is going home with another child and/or adult. If your child is to walk home with a child from the Prairie Crossing

neighborhood, please send a note to their teacher giving permission. Students sometimes get confused about play dates so it is very important that the parents inform us. *Students may not call home during the day to get permission for play dates.* Please make those arrangements ahead of time.

School-Day Procedures

Arrival and Departure Times

School hours are from 8:00 am – 3:30 pm for grades 1-8 and from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm for Kindergarten. On early release days, school hours for all students are from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm. Students are encouraged to arrive for school 5 -10 minutes before class begins. Weather permitting, recess will be supervised on the Market Square before school. Please do not arrive before the designated drop off time of 7:40 am, as we do not have personnel available to supervise students. Students are not to be on school grounds unsupervised before 7:40 and after 3:30. Please see after care to make arrangements for late pick ups.

Tardiness and Early Pick-Up

All students are expected to arrive at school and be in their assigned classroom by 8:00am. Students will be considered tardy if they are not in the classroom by 8:00.

Beginning at 8:00, the carpool volunteers will be notified that students, *accompanied by a parent/guardian*, will need to report to the office for a tardy pass using Navigate360. It is very important for an adult to accompany the student to the office to sign them in for the day. Students will need to present the pass to their teacher in order to get into class. If a student does not have a tardy pass, they will be sent back to the office to get one. We remind you not to drop your student off in the Comstock parking lot or park in that lot to drop your student off at school. Please note that in inclement weather the Administration may change the Tardy Time accordingly to allow for safe drop off. To help parents keep track of tardiness, a letter will be sent home following seven (7) tardies, and after fifteen (15) tardies, a second letter will go home from the Executive Director. Any tardies beyond fifteen (15) will be reported to the Regional Office of Education Project Pass. *The State of Illinois feels so strongly about students arriving at school on time that a record of tardiness is kept with the progress report in each student's permanent file.*

Absenteeism

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of Prairie Crossing Charter School ([Attendance and Truancy Policy](#)) that the only acceptable reason for student absence is illness or an appointment with a physician. Family compliance with this policy is crucial to the progress of each student and the smooth functioning of the class unit. Absences for reasons other than illness/emergency are not permissible. Please remember that PCCS is a public school and is subject to state regulations. The State of Illinois requires attendance to be recorded on the student's progress report and as part of the student's permanent file.

All absences should be called into the absence line **224-541-3960** prior to the start of school. The school will attempt to contact parents if the absence is not called in by 9:00 am. If contact is not established, it will be assumed that the absence is unexcused. Schoolwork for each day that the student is absent must be completed. All incomplete work is noted on the student's progress report.

Please help our daily attendance, and promote your child’s consistent education by not taking vacations during school attendance days. Every effort should be made to plan vacations during regularly scheduled holidays so that students do not miss instruction. Upon written request from the parent/guardian, the administration may approve prearranged absences. Approval will be granted when the absence is of significant benefit to the student. Sometimes parents request assignments in advance. Teachers cannot always honor these requests, although we do try to accommodate them when possible. It is often difficult for teachers to accurately predict what homework will be, and for students to do homework properly while on vacation. It should be understood that if absences occur due to vacation, the student will be responsible for making up any missed assignments, tests, and other activities. Upon the day the student returns to school, it is the responsibility of the family/student to contact the teacher(s) to develop a plan for completing all work in a timely manner.

Students not in attendance for a full day will not be permitted to participate in school sponsored after school activities on that day. These include but are not limited to athletic competitions & dances.

Please try to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours. Please keep the following guidelines in mind so that your child’s absence has the least effect on their education.

Grade	Attendance requirements
Kindergarten and 1st Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 hours attendance counts as a full day • 2 hours attendance counts as a ½ day
2nd through 8th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 hours attendance counts as a full day • 2.5 hours attendance counts as a ½ day

To help parents keep track of absences, the office will notify you by letter when your child has missed seven (7) days of school. A second letter will follow for fifteen (15) days of absences and a letter will be sent to the Regional Office of Education Truancy Office and or reported to the Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS). This letter will be kept in your child’s file. It is extremely important to maintain good attendance.

Classwork for Absences

All students will have the option of requesting classwork on the second day of an absence due to illness if the parents perceive that this is in the best interests of their child and if the request is made to the school secretary by 8:30 AM through email or by phone. Homework requests should not be made if a student is absent for just one day. Please note that if the teacher is absent on that day, the substitute will not be able to comply with this request. Teachers will provide handouts and other materials not available on-line in the main office for pick-up during school hours between 2:30-3pm.

Restroom Etiquette

The bathroom is one of the few places in school that often is unsupervised. As a result, the bathroom is a frequent site of behavior problems. Those can range from writing on the wall to plugging up a toilet with paper towels to festooning a bathroom stall with toilet paper. Then, of

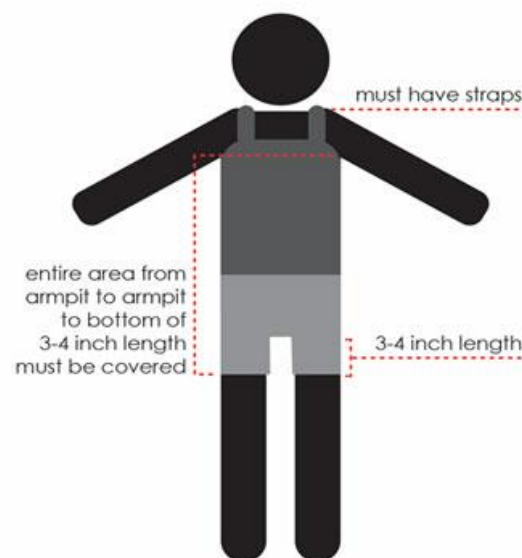
course, there are the dawdlers -- those students who hang out in the bathroom to avoid going back to class. Most importantly, the restrooms are a shared space that require our cooperation towards cleanliness and the other students. Students are expected to leave the restroom facilities in a clean dry and orderly condition for the next user. Staff will teach, remind, and expect proper etiquette at all times. Students chronically responsible for destruction or disrespect in the restrooms will be subject to intervention and/or disciplinary action.

Dress and Appearance

While PCCS recognizes that each student has the right to freedom of expression, the purpose of the student dress code is to contribute in a positive way to the daily school environment. If a student is not properly attired for the day's activity, safety will be put first and they may not be permitted to participate in a scheduled activity. As a reminder at PCCS, students should dress appropriately for the weather and expect to go outside on a daily basis. We also recognize that certain activities require suitable clothing and modifications may be made as activities warrant. The expectation is that students and staff dress appropriately for a school setting. The following guidelines will be required while on school property, or at a school- related activity.

Minimum Requirements:

1. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs (see image). Tops must have shoulder straps. Rips or tears in clothing should be less than 4 inches in length.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment (house slippers are approved for wear in the classroom only).
3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meet the minimum requirements of the dress code.
4. Headgear including hats, hoodies, and caps are not allowed unless permitted for religious, medical, or other reasons as approved by school administration.
5. Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.



Additional Requirements:

1. Clothing may not depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
2. Clothing may not depict or imply pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
3. Clothing may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.
4. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
5. Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building.
6. Clothing and accessories that endanger student or staff safety may not be worn.

7. Apparel, jewelry, accessories, tattoos, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior is prohibited.

The administration reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate dress. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines will not be allowed to attend class. Parents will be called if appropriate clothing is not available or the student refuses dress-code appropriate clothing.

Personal Items

Students need to bring a backpack, trash free lunch and/or snack in a reusable lunch bag, and a take-home folder to school each day. Please check this take-home folder daily for messages. If students wish to bring playground equipment from home, the teacher must give permission. It is important that every personal item that comes to school with your child is labeled.

Electronic Devices and Valuables

Cellular phones, watches, pagers, and any other wireless devices may be brought to school, but they must be turned off during school hours and kept in the students' backpacks at all times. Students found in possession of these items during school hours will have the item confiscated by the staff member. A parent will be required to come to school in order to get the item back.

Portable music devices, electronic games, cameras, other expensive technology equipment, expensive jewelry, and large sums of money are strongly discouraged. Possession of these items will result in confiscation until a parent can pick them up at school. The school is not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen or confiscated.

Forgotten Items

On occasion, a student may forget an item needed for class or lunch. When such an item is brought to the office, a message will be passed to the classroom teacher and when feasible, the student will be sent to the office to retrieve the item. The office will not call the classroom during instruction, and parents cannot bring items directly to classrooms, as this interrupts the learning process.

Lost and Found

Many teachers have lost and found boxes in their classrooms. Students may check for lost items before/after school or during recess. The contents of the classroom boxes will be added to the main lost and found boxes located in the center hall of each classroom building. *Every two weeks, all unclaimed items will be sent to an appropriate charitable organization.*

School Dances Guidelines

At PCCS we believe that hard work and fun go hand in hand. We are glad to sponsor dances for our students to have the opportunity to socialize with their peers. These dances are held at the school so all school policies are in effect. It is our intent to provide a fun and safe environment for all students, staff and chaperones. Below are guidelines that will be in effect at all school dances.

- Only students currently enrolled at PCCS and in the grade the dance is being held for may attend.

- A signed permission slip must be turned in on time (permission slips will not be accepted at the door the night of the event).
- Students must sign in when they enter the dance and must be signed out by an adult when leaving. If a student is being picked up by another parent, that parent will sign the student out and take responsibility once they leave school.
- Once a student leaves the dance, s/he may not return.
- The school dress code is in place. Students dressed inappropriately will have the opportunity to change and return to the dance.
- Cell phones and recording devices, digital/flash photography may not be used at the dance without written permission from the Dean. Students may have cell phones to call home before and after the dance only.
- Use or possession of controlled substances or paraphernalia is prohibited.
- Students using inappropriate language or creating an unsafe environment will be asked to leave.

While we do not want to place harsh guidelines, we want to make sure that all students and their families understand that safety comes first. If at any time you have any questions regarding a school dance or function, please contact the Dean.

Visitation Procedure

Per [Sec. 24-25 of the School Code](#). Teachers and other employees may request any person entering a public school building or the grounds which are owned or leased by the board and used for school purposes and activities to identify themselves and the purpose of his entry. A person who refuses to provide such information is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. Authorized agents of an exclusive bargaining representative, upon notifying the school office, may meet with school employees in the school building during duty free times of such employees. (Source: P.A. 86-202.)

Parents, grandparents and/or legal guardians of PCCS students are encouraged to visit the school throughout the year. Our shared commitment is essential for the safety of our students and staff. Therefore, to minimize potential interruptions to learning, we require the following guidelines be followed:

- Sign in and out with [Navigate360](#) in the Reception Area and wear a visitor sticker.
- Individuals other than parents, grandparents, legal guardians, and/or special administrative guests are not permitted to visit classrooms. Special circumstances *previously arranged and with prior approval received* by administration are the only exceptions to this protocol.
- If you would like to request a conference with the teacher, please make your request minimally 24 hours in advance and leave your contact information for the teacher in the Reception Area.
- Parents may *either* visit the classroom at the teacher's/ school's invitation or request to make a formal visit to your child's classroom.
- Making a group meeting appointment with the school at least *two (2) days* in advance is not only a courtesy and a requirement, but enables you and PCCS to schedule the visitation for maximum benefit. Teachers cannot stop teaching to confer with parents who stop by without an appointment.
- Time and length of stay will be at the discretion of the teacher and/or PCCS administration.

- If you are planning to have lunch with your student(s) for any reason, we ask that you follow the prescribed guidelines above.
- PCCS reserves the right to deny visitation during the first month of school, local/state testing, and during the last month of school.
- PCCS retains the authority to deny access to the school for any individual who has **or** may disrupt **or** disturb the learning environment or who lacks a valid or legal purpose for entering the school.

Communication Procedures

Parents play an integral role in the educational experience of the students at Prairie Crossing Charter School. The staff at the school values open communication with parents and sees communication between parents, administration, staff, and the Board of Directors as important. These guidelines are designed to facilitate this communication.

Communication Overview

To keep parents well informed, there will be a bi-weekly school newsletter, bi-weekly class letter or blog, and notices regarding any changes or special events that are happening. Newsletters will be available on the teacher's classroom page on the school website on a bi-weekly basis. Periodic phone calls, two scheduled conferences per year as well as informal conferencing at the teacher or parent's request, and three progress reports will keep parents apprised of their student's progress in school. Ongoing information about classroom happenings may be obtained from the [Parent Portal](#) portion of the website.

Who Do I Talk To?

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 special teachers, this is the Dean of Faculty and Students; for Special Education personnel, this is the Director of Special Ed and Student Services; for the school administrative team, this is the Executive Director; and for the Executive Director this is the Board. Generally it is best to meet face to face, 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.

Parents should communicate directly to their Classroom Teacher if:

- There is an issue pertaining to that specific classroom.
- There is a concern regarding a classroom issue or the curriculum for your child. The teacher 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 student's educational activities.
- There is an issue 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.

Parents should communicate directly to the Administration if:

- There are questions about school-wide curriculum, extracurricular activities in general, instructional practice, or student discipline beyond the classroom.
- There are questions about school wide policies and procedures regarding student safety, recess, and other day-to-day operations.
- Direct teacher contact has proven ineffective.

Parents should contact the Board of Directors if there are questions regarding school policy.

Mutually Respectful Communication

If you are communicating via email we remind that most teachers typically check their emails once per day during school hours. Typically, you can expect acknowledgement of your email within 48 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks) and a more complete response within 72 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks).

Power Announcements

Prairie Crossing Charter School utilizes the Power Announcement Communication System to notify parents of school closings, early releases, and delayed starts. It can also be used in an emergency situation to describe the event and/or give parents specific instructions. All parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this communication tool. When a message is sent, the school office number will appear. Please do not disregard the call as it will contain important information. Please ensure that you have updated your parent portal in the PowerSchool system with the correct numbers you would like to be contacted through; alternately, you may contact the office with updated phone and email information.

School Closure

Prairie Crossing Charter School will remain open whenever possible. We know that parents depend on us to be open and that it is difficult for families to rearrange schedules when school is not in session. We will try to open school at the normal time and keep students in school until the normal dismissal time. Please be advised emergencies related to heating, water for sanitation and/or electricity can affect the timeliness of our notices.

The Executive Director will make a decision regarding closing school, delaying the opening time, by 6:00 a.m. Parents and students can check the status of PCCS in the following ways:

- Posting on the school website
- Email announcement and/or phone call

We recognize that we may be open on days when the weather is questionable. We encourage parents to make the decision about school attendance that is best for their family. If, for any reason, you feel that it is not safe for your child to attend school, you should keep them at home and call the school to report the absence.

Remote Learning: Should the school be forced to close due to weather or other unexpected conditions, PCCS may use remote learning to conduct school for that day or days. [Remote Learning Guidelines](#)

Newsletters/Web Page Updates

Parents will receive communications/web page updates from Prairie Crossing Charter School each week. PCCS uses Constant Contact as our web platform for all-school email correspondence regarding all school events, programs, and important school information.

Classroom web page updates will detail specific information about the classroom, curriculum, assignments, homework, and current events.

Website

Keep up to date on the latest news! Explore the school website. You can find some of the following information including the School Calendar, Friday Newsletter, Virtual Backpack, Parent Student Handbook, Medical Forms, Supply List and more.

Family Involvement

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 Charter School mission is critical. This role can take many forms.

All parents are encouraged to provide a home atmosphere in which their students 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 student'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.

Volunteering at School

Parents of Prairie Crossing Charter School students are welcome to volunteer for many school activities in the classroom; as chaperones 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, etc.; in contributing special talents and skills; or by providing financial contributions to the school. However, volunteerism and financial contributions are not requirements for enrolling in or remaining at Prairie Crossing Charter School. As volunteer activities are so important to the operation of the School, it is essential that they be conducted in concert with and in support of the school's staff. Volunteers in the classroom are cherished and appreciated at Prairie Crossing Charter School. *Volunteers are required to complete and sign a [Volunteer Information & Assurances](#) form prior to the first volunteering opportunity as well as submit a current certificate of completion of the [DCFS Mandated Reporter](#) training.* The Volunteer Information & Assurance form only needs to be completed once, but the Mandated Reporter must be renewed every 3 years. *Contact the office with questions.*

PSO (Parent-Staff Organization)

The Parent-Staff Organization serves the Prairie Crossing Charter School Community and as a support to the school. The functions of the PSO include fundraising, sponsoring parent forums and discussion groups, organizing volunteers for various projects for the school, facilitating the use of parent helpers in the classrooms, and other projects and committees. Our current PSO officers are listed below. For more information about the PSO, please contact the school office.

PSO Officers	Name	Contact Information
President	Katie Brzezinski	psopresident@pccharterschool.org
Vice President	Kristin Graham	psovicepresident@pccharterschool.org
Treasurer	Lauren Adams	psotreasurer@pccharterschool.org
Recording Secretary	Rebecca Daughtery	psosecretary@pccharterschool.org

School Board Policies

Please refer to the school website for complete [board policies](#).

Homeless Students

Each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, as provided to other children and youths, including a public preschool education. A "homeless child" is defined as provided in the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and State Law. The school will follow the [Procedure for Education of Homeless Children](#)

Fee Waiver Policy

Definition of School Fees: "School fees" or "fees" mean any monetary charge collected by PCCS from a student or the parents or guardian of a student as a prerequisite for the student's participation in any curricular or extracurricular program of PCCS. It is not defined as a fee when PCCS requires that a student provide their own ordinary supplies or materials (e.g. pencils, paper, and notebooks) that are necessary to participate in any curricular or extracurricular program.

Prairie Crossing Charter School has a yearly instructional fee based on grade band. The instructional fee schedule for school year 2024/25 is:

Grade Band	Instructional Fees
Kindergarten	\$100.00
Grades 1 – 4	\$120.00
Grades 5 – 6	\$140.00
Grades 7 – 8	\$155.00

PCCS also charges fees for school field trips as well as involvement in extracurricular activities. School fees do not include fines and other charges made for the loss, misuse, or destruction of school property; charges for the purchase of pictures; charges for optional travel undertaken by a school club or group of students outside of school hours; charges for admission to school dances, athletic events, or other social events; or charges for optional community service programs.

Students Eligible for Waiver

Each student's instructional fee is due by July 1st each year. For students that enroll in Prairie Crossing Charter School during the school year, this fee is due on their first day of attendance.

The due dates for fees for extracurricular activities vary and are provided to students interested in those activities.

Fees may be waived for students whose family income falls within the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines for free or reduced price lunch and breakfast. Fees may also be waived for students whose families have suffered a significant loss of income due to death, severe illness, or injury in the family or unusual expenses incurred because of a natural catastrophe.

Any family unable to pay the instructional fee or needing extra time to pay the fee should submit the Request for Fee Waiver or Fee Payment Plan to Prairie Crossing Charter School's Executive Director by July 1 or no later than the first day of attendance for students enrolling in PCCS during the school year. For fees for extracurricular activities, due dates will be provided with the information about each activity.

The Executive Director will process the request within thirty (30) calendar days and reply to the family with a payment plan, fee waiver statement, or denial of request. PCCS's Executive Director shall decide waivers on a case-by-case basis in a non-discriminatory fashion and shall rely upon documentation submitted by the applicant. The Executive Director's decision can be appealed to the School Board.

Payment plans will be provided for students whose families do not qualify for fees to be waived but whose students would be prohibited from attending Prairie Crossing Charter School or taking part in extracurricular activities unless a payment plan is provided. Explanation for payment plan requests will be reviewed by the Executive Director as provided above.

Notification to Parents/Guardian

PCCS's policy for the waiver of school fees shall be communicated in writing to the parents or guardians of all students enrolled in the PCCS near the beginning of July with the first bill or fee notice sent and any other time a notice of fees (e.g. for extracurricular activities) is sent to parents. PCCS also will state in all of its notices sent to parents who owe fees that PCCS waives fees for persons unable to afford them in accordance with its policy and the procedure for applying for a fee waiver. The Executive Director's name, address, phone number, and email address will be included. A fee waiver application form also may be included with this notice when it is sent to parents. The notification will be in English, Spanish, or the home language of the parents, if it is needed to ensure their understanding of the district's policy (if translation of the notice is not feasible, PCCS will use interpreters, e.g. other students or neighbors). The notice shall describe:

- PCCS's policy, including the criteria and other circumstances under which PCCS will waive school fees or provide a payment plan for these fees;
- the fees subject to waiver under the district's policy;
- the procedure to be used by parents in applying for a waiver of school fees;
- the procedure to be used by parents in resolving disputes concerning the waiver of school fees.

If the fee waiver policy and/or procedures are substantially amended, then parents of students enrolled in PCCS shall be notified in writing within thirty (30) calendar days following the adoption of the amendments.

Resolution of Disputes

If PCCS denies a request for a fee waiver or payment plan, then it shall mail a copy of its decision to the parents within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the request. The decision shall state the reason for the denial and shall inform the parents of their right to appeal, including the process and timelines for that action. The denial notice shall also include a statement informing the parents that they may reapply for a waiver or payment plan at any time during the school year, if circumstances change.

An appeal shall be decided within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the parents' request for an appeal. Parents shall have the right to meet with the President of the PCCS Board of Directors, who will decide the appeal, in order to explain why the fee waiver or payment plan should be granted. If the appeal is denied, then PCCS shall mail a copy of its decision to the parents. The decision shall state the reason for the denial.

No fee shall be collected from any parent who is seeking a fee waiver in accordance with PCCS's policy until the district has acted on the initial request or appeal (if any is made), and the parents have been notified of its decision.

Confidentiality

School records that identify individual students as applicants for or recipients of fee waivers are subject to the Illinois School Student Records Act (105 ILCS 10/1 et seq.). Information from such records is confidential and may be disclosed only as provided in the Act.

Prohibition Against Discrimination or Punishment

No discrimination or punishment of any kind, including the lowering of grades or exclusion from classes, will be exercised against a student whose parents or guardians are unable to purchase required textbooks or instructional materials or to pay required fees.

School Records

School records are maintained by the Administrative staff and kept in the school office. Permanent records will consist of student identification, academic transcripts, attendance records, and health records. Temporary records will consist of other academic information such as standardized testing, anecdotal observations, and reports of psychological evaluations, special education information, and any other classroom records. The school keeps permanent records for 60 years unless they are forwarded to another school. Temporary records are destroyed five years after graduation with parent notification. Student records can be viewed by parents in the presence of an administrator. Interested parents should contact the school office ahead of time to schedule an appointment. For more specific information, please contact the school office for the Board of Education School Records Policy.

No Photo Procedures

As an outreach tool for prospective new families and as way to share positive news with our Prairie Crossing Charter School (PCCS) community, your child(ren) may be photographed or videotaped during classroom or extracurricular activities on our school grounds or at school sponsored events for instructional, educational, informational or publicity purposes. The identifiable names, voices, images, works, photographs and/or videos of students may be used in various PCCS related publications, including and without limitation - the PCCS website, PCCS Social Media Pages, news releases, television productions,, school yearbooks, school

newsletters, public newspapers, community events, presentations at professional conferences and Board of Education meetings. Pictures of students published will not identify students by their full name without permission from the Parent/Guardian. This information shall not be used for paid commercial purposes. The release of publications of such student information will also be consistent with the Illinois School Student Records Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. The “No Photo List” is reviewed as part of all event (field trips, assemblies, celebrations, etc) planning to better ensure accuracy and compliance with this policy.

Parents/Guardians indicate either photo permission preference when you completed the yearly registration forms. If you have any questions or wish to change your preference, please email [Frances Verenski](#).



**Parent/Student Handbook
2024-2025**