



Parent/Student

Handbook

2007-2008

updated August 2007



1531 Jones Point Road
TEL 847-543-9722

Grayslake, IL 60030-3536
FAX 847-543-9744

Visit us at www.pccs.ws

Email: pccsoffice@pssc.ws

Where education comes naturally!

Parent/Student Handbook 2007-2008

This form must be signed and returned to the office by Friday, September 14, 2007.

Thank you

Please print first and last names of students attending PCCS:

I verify that our family has received one copy of the **Parent-Student Handbook** for the 2007-2008 school year as issued by Prairie Crossing Charter School.

Parent Signature _____

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School Information

School address: Prairie Crossing Charter School
1531 Jones Point Road
Grayslake, IL 60030-3536

Phone number: 847-543-9722
E-mail: pccsoffice@pccs.ws

Fax number: 847-543-9744
Web Page: www.pccs.ws

Calendar of Events

Aug. 13-20Teacher Inservice	Jan. 22..... Board Meeting
Aug. 21First Day of School	
	Feb. 18No School: President's Day
Sept. 3No School: Labor Day	Feb. 16Farm to Table
Sept. 12.....Parent Volunteer Mtg 8:15 am	Feb. 20PSO Experience
Sept. 10-14.....7 th grade to Eagle Bluff	Feb. 26 Board Meeting
Sept. 10-17.....NWEA Testing	Feb. 27Early Release (1:00)
Sept. 15PSO Experience	Feb. 29End of 2nd Trimester (60 days)
Sept. 18.....Curriculum Night (6:00pm)	
Sept. 17-21.....8 th grade to Conserve School	Mar. 7..... Report Cards Home
Sept. 20.....Farm to Table	Mar. 8..... PCCS Auction
Sept. 20.....Parent Volunteer Mtg 7pm	Mar. 13..... Conferences – Early Release (1:00)
Sept. 19Early Release (1:00)	Mar. 14.....Conferences – Early Release (1:00)
Sept. 25..... Curriculum Night (6:00pm)	Mar. 18..... Board Meeting
Sept. 25.....Board Meeting	Mar. 19Farm to Table
Sept. 30..... Edible Harvest/5K Run	Mar. 24-28Spring Break: No School
	Mar. 31School Reconvenes
Oct. 5No School -Teacher Institute Day	
Oct. 8 No School: Columbus Day	Apr. 16Farm to Table
Oct. 17Early Release (1:00)	Apr. 17Early Release (1:00)
Oct. 18Farm to Table	Apr. 18No School: Teacher Institute Day
Oct. 20PSO Experience	Apr. 19PSO Experience
Oct. 23..... Board Meeting	Apr. 21-25..... Earth Week
	Apr. 22 Board Meeting
Nov. 14Farm to Table	
Nov. 16End of 1st Trimester (61 days)	May 5-16 8 th grade trip to VA
Nov. 20PSO Experience	May 10..... Plant Sale
Nov. 21-23No School: Thanksgiving	May 14Early Release (1:00)
Nov. 26Report Cards Home	May 15-17.....Rummage Sale
Nov. 27..... Board Meeting	May 19-23.....7 th gr. Trip to Devil's Lake
Nov. 29Conferences – Early Release (1:00)	May 22..... Band Concert 7:00pm
Nov. 30Conferences – Early Release (1:00)	May 24..... Prairie Pedal
	May 26No School: Memorial Day
Dec 12 Early Release (1:00)	May 27..... Board Meeting
Dec 7 or 14..... Holiday Bazaar	May 28..... Farm to Table
Dec. 15..... PSO Experience	May 28-30.....5/6 gr. Campout #1
Dec. 20..... Band Concert 7:00pm	
Dec. 18..... Board Meeting	June 2-4..... 5/6 gr. Campout #2
Dec 24-Jan 4No School: Winter Break	June 4 8th Grade Graduation
	June 6Early Release: End 3rd Trimester (63 days)
Jan. 7School Reconvenes	June 6Last Day: Report Card Home
Jan. 16Early Release (1:00)	June 9-13Emergency Make Up Days
Jan. 17Farm to Table	June 24 Board Meeting
Jan. 19PSO Experience	
Jan. 21No School: MLK Jr. Day	

Teachers
2007 – 2008

Kindergarten Teachers

Mrs. Shirley Berger sberger@pccs.ws

Ms. Katy Fields kfields@pccs.ws

1st Grade Teacher

Mr. Kelly Smith ksmith@pccs.ws

1st/2nd Grade Teachers

Ms. Patricia Johnson pjohnson@pccs.ws

Ms. Heather Spinney hspinney@pccs.ws

2nd Grade Teachers

Mrs. Christine Jeffery cjeffery@pccs.ws

3rd Grade Teacher

Mrs. Cynthia McGovern cmcgovern@pccs.ws

3rd/4th Grade Teachers

Ms. Sharon Gaughan sgaughan@pccs.ws

Ms. Lynn Hahn lhahn@pccs.ws

4th Grade Teacher

Mr. Pete Dawley pdawley@pccs.ws

5th Grade Teacher

Ms. Claire Di Nanno cdinanno@pccs.ws

5th/6th Grade Teachers

Mr. Chris Hershiser chershiser@pccs.ws

Ms. Andrea Koeniger Akoeniger@pccs.ws

6th Grade Teacher

Ms. Kimberly Howell khowell@pccs.ws

7th Grade Teachers

Mr. Ben Haight bhaight@pccs.ws

Ms. Angela Viands aviands@pccs.ws

8th Grade Teachers

Mr. Paul Habel phabel@pccs.ws

Mrs. Patrisia Mallin pmallin@pccs.ws

Teacher Assistants

Assistants: Reena Bagri, Donna Krissek, Nasreen Nasir, Gery Thomas-McGraw, Cathy Sickle, Nicole Wnek, Carol Flaig, Katie Germata, Cathy Knight, Madhu Kumar, Peggy Boyle, Annette Johnson, Julie Stempeck, Marsha Pulizzano, Megan Kovacs, Frances Verenski, Jody Hoffman, Kathy Rocher

Specials Teachers

Special Education Teachers

Mrs. Jennifer Hoffarth jhoffarth@pccs.ws

Mrs. Laura Ryner lryner@pccs.ws

Environmental Education Coordinator

Mrs. Naomi Dietzel-Dulin

Farm Educator

Nichole Capizzi & Brittany Futterman

Spanish Teachers

Ms. Erica Nathan enathan@pccs.ws

Mr. Ray Martinez rmartinez@pccs.ws

Music Teacher

Mrs. Ilse Sutchar isutchar@pccs.ws

Art Teacher

Mrs. Sue Miedona smiedona@pccs.ws

Physical Education Teacher

Mrs. Nancy Pillow npillow@pccs.ws

Lead Teacher for Technology

Mr. Kelly Smith webmaster@pccs.ws

Social Worker

Mrs. Caryn Meyer cmeyer@pccs.ws

Occupational Therapist

Mrs. Katie Vanderbilt kvanderbilt@pccs.ws

Psychologist

Mrs. Ginger Bohac gbohac@pccs.ws

Speech Specialist Limited

Mr. Chet Caruth

School Administration 2007-2008

Director: Mr. Myron Dagley
mdagley@pccs.ws 847-543-9722

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Kathy Beyer
kbeyer@pccs.ws 847-543-9722

Principal: Dr. Margaret Pennington
mpennington@pccs.ws 847-231-6598

School Secretary: Mrs. Yvonne Schaefer
pccsoffice@pccs.ws 847-543-9722

Director of Spec Ed: Mrs. Kathleen Carani
kcarani@pccs.ws 847-548-1286

Business Manager: Mrs. Betsy Jung
bjung@pccs.ws 847-543-0752

Educational Consultant: Mrs. Kathleen Lynch
klynch@pccs.ws 847-548-1286

Benefits/Facilities Coordinator: Mrs. Mary Burks
mburks@pccs.ws 847-543-0752

Director of Development & Community Relations:
847-543-9872

Bookkeeper: Mrs. Christine Erickson
cerickson@pccs.ws 847-543-0752

Maintenance: Mr. Tom Moran
tmoran@pccs.ws

Board Members 2007 – 2008

Ellen Winick	847-543-8313	winickpccs@comcast.net
Laura Fay	847-837-0414	lefay@sbcglobal.net
Bob Creviston	847-223-1926	bobcrevistonpccs@aol.com
Bob Bentz	847-548-0751	gf1399@aol.com
Linda Wiens	847-543-4403	lweins@prairiecrossing.com
Kim Vander Yacht	847-599-9441	vanderboat@comcast.net
John Rizzo	847-855-2702	rizzopccs@comcast.net
Cheryl Pytlarz	847-482-0019	cherylpooh@aol.com
Dennis Munk	847-548-5515	munk59@comcast.net

PSO Officers 2007 - 2008

Michelle Helle, President
Dawn Gehring, Treasurer

Roz Deigan, Vice President
Caragh Caddell, Reporter

Prairie Crossing Charter School

Mission Statement

Prairie Crossing Charter School is a child-centered community of learners. We use an ecological, integrated, experiential approach to learning, which utilizes unique environmental and community resources. We develop students who demonstrate environmental stewardship and responsible, global citizenship.

Prairie Crossing Charter School Guiding Principles

- 1. An integrated approach to learning centered around the environment.** The natural world is inherently interesting to children and therefore serves as a setting and springboard for learning all subjects at Prairie Crossing Charter School. Teachers help students to deepen their understanding of the world by connecting all disciplines and to communicate their awe and understanding to others.
- 2. Love of learning.** Prairie Crossing Charter School students have time and opportunity to learn through their senses, experiences, and discoveries, sparked by curiosity and a sense of wonder. They experience the joy and excitement that comes when hard work leads to understanding and competence.
- 3. Search for excellence in all we do.** We seek to define and achieve excellence in all we do. We recognize many different types and measures of excellence. We strive to achieve it personally and collectively.
- 4. A sense of place.** The children of Prairie Crossing Charter School will experience firsthand the ecology of the land that surrounds the school. They will understand that we are all part of the earth and it is part of us. A strong sense of place within the natural and human community, both local and worldwide, will be the legacy of Prairie Crossing Charter School.
- 5. A small school that fosters learning.** The best learning takes place when teachers can give individual attention to each child and the overall school community is small enough for everyone to know and support each other. Therefore we will stay a small school with small classes.
- 6. A community of learners.** Prairie Crossing Charter School is a dynamic endeavor where teachers can learn and students can teach, where young people see adults grow in knowledge, adults take pleasure in watching children's knowledge expand, and where people delight in sharing information and wisdom.
- 7. A constructivist way of learning and teaching.** Constructivism helps students build meaning from their experiences, prior knowledge, and observations. It also confronts them with new situations that require them to reconstruct their knowledge.
- 8. Character development woven into the fabric of learning.** Prairie Crossing Charter School intentionally incorporates character development into its daily curriculum and activities. Teachers, administrators, students, and families work together to assure the healthy development of every child and to address moral and ethical issues so that each has the knowledge, skills, and resiliency to act with integrity.
- 9. Accountability and responsibility:** We pay close attention to leadership, governance, and management at Prairie Crossing Charter School. This includes maintaining our charter, meeting

state requirements, and ensuring financial viability. Ultimately we are most accountable for the children learning.

- 10. Contribution to public education.** In return for the freedom it has been granted as a charter school, Prairie Crossing Charter School seeks ways to offer its integrated environmental curriculum to other schools. We document the effective and innovative aspects of our programs and teaching methods, offer professional development programs to other educators, and partner with other schools in the exciting enterprise of learning.

Vision of Prairie Crossing Charter School

We envision a small, public school where...

1. Students and teachers are outside daily, immersed in the natural world learning about nature and culture through rich, first-hand contact with world around them. Children and teachers are guided by the cycles and patterns of growth, rainfall, migration, and the changing of the seasons as they learn about the natural world.
2. Children learn about the life cycles of animals and plants as well as the interdependence of life, including our use of plants and animals for food, through their observations, projects and real work on the farm, prairies, woodlands and wetlands that surround the school.
3. Every child is known well by the teachers, and his or her gifts, talents and special needs are recognized and addressed.
4. The school day and year are driven by curiosity and a commitment to learning rather than by mandates or the bell. Teachers have the freedom to shape day-to-day activities based on learning opportunities and teachable moments as well as on a set of rigorous academic standards.
5. The school serves as the anchor of a Conservation Learning Center that includes a conservation resource library, educational workshops and conferences. Teachers, administrators, and other staff members and parents model lifelong learning and environmental stewardship through consistent practices and behavior both in and out of the classroom. Parents, community members, and other individuals share in the learning experience through symposia and round tables sponsored by the PSO and other community organizations.
6. Learning experiences involve a broad community of learners. Children of different ages and abilities work together and with members of other schools, citizens groups, and service organizations. Sometimes they learn within single-grade level classes, sometimes in multi-age classes, and sometimes in groups that include multiple grade levels. All members of the community share questions, misunderstandings, and knowledge both to deepen their own knowledge and to help others do the same.
7. Members of the community show respect and care for each other, for those in the communities that surround us, and for people throughout the world. Children learn to understand and appreciate other cultures. Through their study of the Spanish language in every grade, they gain an enriched sense of Hispanic cultures.
8. Students practice the art of learning and discover how it leads to high achievement. They work on projects that are needed and useful to learn why technique, accuracy, clarity of thought and clear

communication are important. Adults hold high expectations for students and help them unfold their potential.

9. Teachers, administrators, and other staff members collaborate to promote a sense of collective purpose. Teachers reflect together on their practices, critically analyze learning situations in their classrooms, and suggest and engage in creative strategies to provide settings that enable each child to meet the high expectations.
10. Parents play an integral role in the educational experience of the children through volunteer opportunities inside and outside the classroom, leadership positions, and reinforcement at home.
11. Children experience and practice the arts and humanities as an integrated part of their studies in social studies, science, and mathematics.
12. Students come to understand that natural and human communities are one and that environmental stewardship and civic responsibility go hand in hand. They gain a love for learning and a care for the earth and its citizens that continue to develop after they have graduated.

Enrollment / Attendance

Admissions to Prairie Crossing Charter School

Prairie Crossing Charter School students are admitted in accordance with the state Charter School Law. The application process begins in January when parents are encouraged to fill out an application which they can get at the office or from the school website. After all applications have been submitted, returning students are given places, as are their siblings if places are available.

Thereafter, admission is determined by a public lottery. The lottery is a nonexclusive, nondiscriminatory process where all students who live in Districts 50 and 79 are welcome to apply. All applicants have the same chance of being selected. After classes are filled, the lottery continues to create a waiting list for each grade. The application policy and procedures referred to below reflect Prairie Crossing Charter School's intent to maintain integrity and clarity throughout the following admission process.

1. Any student living in District 50 or 79 is eligible for admission to Prairie Crossing Charter School (PCCS).
2. The enrollment period runs from approximately January 1 to March 1 each year. During the time, PCCS sends information in English and Spanish to local newspapers, community service organizations, and other sources advising the community of opening at the school for the coming school year.
3. During the enrollment period, families of current students are asked to inform the school as to whether the student(s) will return for the coming year. These families are also asked to submit applications for any siblings who wish to attend the school, since siblings are given priority where space allows.
4. Also during the enrollment period, applications are available online and at the school for any interested and qualified families. These applications must be submitted to the school prior to the deadline, usually March 1. Families with children on the current waiting list are contacted to determine whether they are interested in being in the lottery for the next school year. The waiting list is not maintained from year to year; a new waiting list is drawn each year.

5. At the end of the enrollment period, the school determines how many spaces are available at each grade level after returning students have been tabulated. Next priority at each grade level is given to siblings of returning students. If there are more siblings than can be accommodated at any given grade level that are on the current year's waiting list, they will remain on the list in the current order. If there are new siblings to be added to the waiting list, their names will be drawn and added to the bottom of the current siblings' waiting list.
6. Once places have been assigned to returning students and their siblings, students from the applicant pool are assigned to the various grade levels. If there are more students than can be accommodated at a given grade level, a lottery is held among new students seeking admission to the affected grade levels, beginning at the highest grade level and moving to the lowest. If any student with siblings in the applicant pool is accepted, his or her siblings are automatically given priority as described above (i.e. the siblings are either accepted or added to the bottom of the waiting list of other siblings at the appropriate grade level).
7. All lotteries are held in public on a publicly disclosed date as soon as possible after the enrollment period has closed. Each lottery is held by grade level and priority as described above. An independent third party randomly selects names from a pool of all applicants to fill each grade level. Additional applicants are placed on a waiting list in the order selected, maintaining a priority status for siblings.
8. All affected families are advised of the results of the lottery as soon as possible in writing and on the website.
9. Students are moved up from the waiting lists as openings occur at their grade level.
10. No priority is given to any applicant to Prairie Crossing Charter School, except returning students, their siblings, and siblings of accepted students, as noted above.

Health and Dental

Medical

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall present proof that the student received a health examination and the immunizations against, and screenings for, preventable communicable diseases, as required by the Department of Public Health rules, within one year prior to:

1. entering kindergarten or the first grade;
2. entering the fifth and ninth grades; and
3. enrolling in an Illinois school, regardless of the student's grade including nursery school, special education, head start programs operated by elementary or secondary schools, and students transferring into Illinois from out-of-state or out-of-country.

The school staff will apprise parents of their obligation in these areas, and will furnish the necessary forms and keep records of compliance. Parents are expected to notify the school of any allergies to food or drugs or other physical disabilities their child may have.

As required by the Illinois Department of Public Health, a diabetes screening must be included as a required part of each health examination; diabetes testing is not required. The required health examinations must be performed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all of its branches, an advanced practice nurse who has a written collaborative agreement with a collaborating physician authorizing the advanced practice nurse to perform health examinations, or a physician assistant who has been delegated the performance of health examinations by a supervising physician.

Parents(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to have their child undergo a vision examination whenever health examinations are required.

Unless the student is homeless, failure to comply with the above requirements by October 15th of the current school year will result in the student's exclusion from school until the required health forms are presented to the office. If medical reason prevents a student from receiving a required immunization by October 15th, the student must present an immunization schedule and a statement of the medical reasons causing the delay by October 15th. The schedule and statement of medical reasons must be signed by a physician, registered nurse, or local health department responsible for administering the immunizations. After the start of the school year, all new students who are first-time registrants shall have 30 days following registration to comply with the health examination and immunization regulations.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years must provide a statement from a physician that their child was "risk-assessed" or screened for lead poisoning in accordance with State law.

In accordance with rules adopted by the Illinois Department of Public Health, a student will be exempted from:

1. This policy's requirements on religious or medical grounds if the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) present to the Director a signed statement explaining the objection,
2. The health examination or immunization requirements on medical grounds if a physician provides written verification or
3. The dental examination requirement if the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) show an undue burden or lack of access to a dentist.

Dental Examination

All children in kindergarten and the second and sixth grades must present proof of having been examined by a licensed dentist before May 15th of the current school year in accordance with rules adopted by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

If a child in the second or sixth grade fails to present proof by May 15th, we may hold the child's report card until the child presents proof: (1) of a completed dental examination, or (2) that a dental examination will take place within 60 days after May 15th. The Director or designee shall ensure parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified of this dental examination requirement at least 60 days before May 15th of each school year.

Homeless Students

Any homeless child shall be immediately admitted, even if the child or child's parent(s)/guardian(s) is unable to produce immunization and health records normally required for enrollment.

Fee Waiver Policy

Definition of School Fees

School fees or fees mean any monetary charge collected by Prairie Crossing Charter School (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 his or her own ordinary supplies or materials (e.g. pencils, paper, notebooks) that are necessary to participate in any curricular or extracurricular program.

Prairie Crossing Charter School has a yearly books, materials, and activity fee of \$250 per child. PCCS also charges fees for involvement in extracurricular activities. School fees do not include library 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 (e.g. before- and after-school child care and recreation programs).

Students Eligible for Waiver

Each child's books, materials, and activity 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 books, materials, and activity fee or needing extra time to pay the fee should submit the form below to Prairie Crossing Charter School's Director **by July 1st** or 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 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 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 Director's decision can be appealed to the School Board President.

Payment plans will be provided for students whose families do not qualify for fees to be waived but whose children 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 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 guardian 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 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 substantively 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.

Transportation

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 day's school hours for all students are from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm.

Children 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 7:45 am, as we do not have personnel available to supervise children.

Drop-Off Procedures

Children are dropped off by car at the entrance to the Kennicott Building. A designated adult greeter will meet each child. Please be careful not to block entrances or roads so that Prairie Crossing residents can reach their destinations. Stay in the carpool line and cars will be unloaded one at a time as quickly as possible. In the carpool line, please do not get out of your car. Have your child exit the car on the passenger side. This is done to ensure your child's safety. To help the cars move forward quickly in line, please refrain from engaging the greeter in conversation.

A teacher or greeter needs to be present before cars are unloaded. It is very important that all children in the school walk from their cars to the Market Square for recess.

You are always welcome to park your car in the Kennicott lot and walk your child to morning recess. At 7:55 am the triangle at PCCS is rung for children to line up and enter the building. It is a good idea to say good-bye at this time and have your child enter the building by him/herself.

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 where there is a sidewalk. There will be a crossing guard present at each of these locations from 7:45 – 8:00 am each morning. **Students may not come through the area south of Market Square; this has caused safety concerns for walkers and bike riders.** Student walkers entering at Jones Point Road will be directed, by the crossing guard, to the sidewalk near the barn. They should follow these sidewalks to Market Square. Student walkers who enter at the corner of Amos Bennett and Prairie Trail should follow the sidewalk around the 5th – 8th grade classroom building and behind the Kennicott Building to Market Square. It is important that students stay on the sidewalk since cars will be driving through the parking lot to drop off students. Students with bicycles should follow the sidewalk to the bicycle racks on the front side (North side) of the 5th – 8th grade building. **All bike riders are required to wear a helmet.**

Pick-Up Procedures

At the end of class, 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 his/her carpool number displayed on the passenger window. **Please help your child to memorize his/her carpool number.** If you wish to speak to a teacher, please call him/her after school. The car-pool line is just too busy for good parent-teacher communication.

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 his/her 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.

Walkers and bike riders picked up by adults are dismissed at the beginning of carpool. Other walkers and bikers are dismissed from their classrooms during the all call at the end of carpool.

Students should leave campus by crossing Jones Point Road near the parking lot or by following the sidewalk to the corner of Amos Bennett Street and Prairie Trail. A crossing guard will be available at these locations to facilitate the safe crossing of students

School Day Procedures

Tardiness

All children are expected to arrive at school and be in their assigned classroom by 8:00. Children will be considered tardy if they are not in the classroom by 8:05. If a child is tardy at PCCS, the child needs to report to the office before going to class. To help parents keep track of tardiness, a letter will be sent home following ten (10) tardies, and after fifteen (15) a second letter will go home from the 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 children arriving at school on time that a record of tardiness is kept with the progress report in the child's permanent file.**

School Safety

All doors to the school buildings will be locked 10 minutes after school starts. **Please ring the doorbell at the entry of the building you are entering and then sign the visitor's log, which the teacher assistant's will have in the classroom.** Parents bringing children late or picking children up early need to check in with the secretary, in the main office, in the Kennicott Building. **When you are in the school please do not open school doors for anyone you do not know.**

Reimbursement

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who must provide transportation to and from school because free transportation is not available for their children may be eligible to receive money from the state to help offset some of the cost, for example, bus fares, or mileage reimbursement for private automobiles at 0.445 cents per mile.

If you can answer yes to the following questions for the 2007-08 school year, you may be eligible to receive reimbursement for providing such transportation.

- 1) Will the pupil be under the age of 21 at the close of the school year?
- 2) Is the pupil a full-time student in grades kindergarten through 12?
- 3) Does the pupil either live 1 1/2 miles or more from school or live less than 1 1/2 miles from school but must be transported due to a serious safety hazard approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation? (See following paragraphs.)
- 4) Does the pupil attend a school within Illinois, which meets Illinois compulsory attendance laws?
- 5) Did the parent/guardian incur transportation expenses resulting from transporting the pupil to and from school?
- 6) Did the pupil not have access to transportation to and from school provided entirely at public expense?

7) Did the parent/guardian reside within Illinois during the time period expenses were incurred?

If you answered yes to the above questions, lived in Illinois and wish to file a claim, you must go to the school where each of your children is enrolled to submit claim information. You may provide claim information to appropriate school personnel at your child's attendance center from **April 1 through June 6, 2008**.

Additionally, there may be some parents who live less than 1.5 miles from the school their child attends and for whom they must provide transportation due to Serious Safety Hazards. A serious safety hazard would be illustrated for example by the intersection of Jones Point Road and Route 45 even with the presence of the traffic light. Such perceived hazards must have been certified by the Regional Office of Education as such any time during the last four school years up to and inclusive of February 1, 2008. Upon request, the Regional Office of Education will mail to the applicant parent a copy of the approved certification of such hazard. Once a parent has received such notice and used same the parent does not need to reapply for certification each year. Parents who received verification of a safety hazard during the school year and after 2003-2004, whose children attended the same school and live at the same address, do not have to reapply for safety hazard verification.

Once all claim information is submitted at the school, it will be transmitted electronically to the Illinois State Board of Education, If your claim information is approved, you should receive a check directly from the state for the lesser of the cost of transporting your child/children or the average per student reimbursement paid to public schools for transporting regular education pupils. If insufficient funds are appropriated by the General Assembly, all claims will be prorated.

If you have any questions, please call or come to the school as soon as possible.

Absenteeism

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Prairie Crossing Charter School's Board of Directors 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 are not acceptable. Please remember that Prairie Crossing Charter School is a public school and is subject to state regulations. The State of Illinois considers attendance to be so important that it is recorded on the child's progress report and becomes part of the child's permanent file.

All absences should be called into the office 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 child's progress report.

It is very important that you communicate with the office if your child has a communicable disease. The families of children in your child's classroom need to be notified.

If a family has an emergency absence, please contact the office.

Upon written request from the parent/guardian, the Principal may approve prearranged absences. Approval will be granted when the absence is of significant benefit to the student. All schoolwork that happens during the absence must be completed satisfactorily.

Please help our daily attendance, and promote your child's consistent education by not taking vacations during school attendance days.

Please try to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours. However, if this is impossible, please keep the following guidelines in mind so that your child's absence has the least effect on our absenteeism.

Kindergartners and First Graders – if they attend 4 hours, it counts for a full day
Second through Eighth Graders – if they attend 5 hours, it counts for a full day
Kindergartners and First Graders – if they attend 2 hours, it counts for 1/2 day
Second through Eighth Graders – if they attend 2.5 hours, it counts for 1/2 day

To help parents keep track of absences, the office will notify you by letter when your child has missed ten (10) days of school. A second letter will follow for fifteen (15) days of absences. A letter will be sent to the Regional Office of Education for absences exceeding twenty (20) days. This letter will be kept in your child's file. It is extremely important to maintain good attendance.

Illness

It is very important that your child stay home if he/she is ill. If your child has a temperature above 100 degrees 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 notify the office 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 are strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, and chicken pox. Remember to notify the office for each subsequent day the child will be absent. A message may always be left on voice mail.**

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.

If your child needs to take prescription or nonprescription medicine at school, you must fill out a special medication form at the school office. Prescription medicine requires a special form to be completed by your child's pediatrician. 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. All medicine, prescription or nonprescription, must be in the original bottle and will be kept in the office. Please remember that it is the parents' responsibility to have prescription medicines refilled. If the principle or director administers any medication to a student a written record of the dosage and time will be put in the students file and a copy will be sent home.

Play Dates

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 at Prairie Crossing, please send a note to her/his teacher giving permission. Children sometimes get confused about play dates so it is very important that the parent inform us. Children may not call home during the day to get permission for play dates. Please make those arrangements ahead of time.

School Dances

Prairie Crossing Charter School dances are for Prairie Crossing Charter School students only. Proper behavior is required of all in attendance.

1. Once you leave the dance you may not return.
2. Usage of controlled substances is forbidden.
3. The school dress code is in place at all school events, including dances.
4. Students will be required to have their student I.D.'s to enter school dances.

Curriculum

Prairie Crossing Charter School provides an extensive curriculum that meets the needs of today's child and prepares them for the future through the use of integrated units centered on the natural environment across all subject areas. The curriculum is designed to provide students many hands-on problem solving experiences to facilitate inquiry and discovery-based learning. Comprehensive multi-grade-level themes are implemented that become progressively more complex as the child advances through the grades and experiences a very personal, internal, constructivist learning environment.

- It is our goal to help children learn to become environmental stewards of the twenty-first century. Emphasis is placed on environmental education and topics are taught to include an environmental perspective.
- Our curriculum is enhanced through activities and experiences that are planned to include the natural surroundings of our school.
- All curricular areas employ a variety of methods of learning so that each child's learning style can be met. Constructivist and problem-based approaches are used throughout the school year. Teachers facilitate experiences and students collaborate on solutions to real-world problems.
- Children are exposed to the world of books to help them develop valuable reading, critical thinking and inquiry skills. We seek to foster enthusiasm and a love for reading through classroom reading involving literature with integrated themes that are studied in class.
- All children use a mathematics program employing an organized sequence of skills which focuses upon problem solving as a basis for instruction in mathematics. Integration of mathematics concepts, skills and problem solving techniques into all areas of the curriculum occurs.
- Students at all grade levels participate in various age-appropriate service learning projects which enhance the classroom curriculum and apply what each student learns to the world around them, in order to transform the student into a more responsible and respectful global citizen.
- Students experience a writing program which teaches necessary skills while fostering the creative aspects of writing.
- Students study the arts through a variety of multi-cultural experiences which compliment units of study.

- Spanish is taught at all grade levels employing interactive, hands-on activities (cultural games, songs, arts and crafts, etc.) as well as various research-based projects that incorporate language acquisition throughout the school year to both foster the children's love of languages and build upon the importance of early second language acquisition.
- Appropriate use of modern technology (computers, video, cameras, simulations, etc.) enhances the curriculum.
- Children are grouped for instruction in a variety of ways. Multi-age grouping and looping up from one grade level to the next may occur.
- For more information on curriculum for each specific grade level, visit our web site at www.pccs.ws.

Testing

Beginning with second grade, children will be tested each year. State testing in different subjects for different grade levels is mandated by the State of Illinois. In addition, a nationally normed standardized test will be administered to second through eighth graders.

Electronic Devices and Valuables

Cellular phones, pagers, and any other wireless devices may be brought to school, but they must be turned off during school hours. Picture phones, radios, tape recorders, electronic games, cameras, expensive technology equipment, expensive jewelry, and large sums of money will not be allowed in school unless written exception is given by a teacher or administrator.

Internet usage and use of PCCS Computers and other electronic services

PCCS provides computer, network services, 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-ROM's, and DVD's purchased by PCCS.
4. I will not bring software from home and I will not 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.

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 on 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.

Volunteering in the School

Prairie Crossing Charter School encourages the participation of the entire family in the education process and emphasizes the importance of a pledge to life-long learning. The parental role in achieving the Prairie Crossing vision is critical. This role can take many forms. All parents are encouraged to provide a home atmosphere in which their children are supported in their educational goals. Frequent two-way communication between school and home is a hallmark of PCCS. This serves to keep parents informed of their children's progress and any special help they may need. It also provides an opportunity for the parents to discuss any questions or concerns with school personnel. Parents of Prairie Crossing Charter School students are welcome to volunteer for many school activities in the classroom; as chaperones and drivers for field trips; as helpers in the maintenance of the school; as coaches, as participants in Parent Staff Organization (PSO); as members of the school board or its committees, task forces, etc.; in contributing special talents and skills; or by providing financial contributions to the school. **However, no parent is required to volunteer at the school or provide financial contributions.** Children will not be discriminated against in any way if parents are unable or choose not to volunteer or contribute financially. **Volunteerism and financial contributions are not requirements for enrolling in or remaining at Prairie Crossing Charter School.**

Because 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 teaching staff. It is the role of the Board to set the policy of the school; of the administration and staff to implement that policy; and the volunteers to support that implementation. Volunteers in the classroom are cherished and appreciated at Prairie Crossing Charter School. Due to the complex nature of the volunteering activity, classroom volunteers are requested to attend an orientation meeting. **Further, they are asked to read and sign a volunteer pledge sheet at the beginning of every year.**

Birthday Treats

Birthdays are a wonderful celebration and we want to honor them at PCCS. We will have a monthly birthday party in each class. Summer birthdays can be celebrated on the ½ birthday. The parent coordinator, teacher and assistant will help plan these celebrations and provide suggestions for healthy treats. If you would like to donate a book or game to your child's classroom in honor of his/her birthday, we would be delighted. Please notify your child's teacher if you plan to do this, as we would like the parent to present the game and/or read the new book to the class. The school will place a dedication sticker on the inside of the book or game.

Birthday parties are important and special to all children. **However, distribution of invitations and thank-you notes should take place out of school.** Talking about birthday parties at school should be kept to a minimum so that other children's feelings do not get hurt. Please see Wellness Policy at school office.

Classroom Celebrations and Parties

At Prairie Crossing Charter School we celebrate a variety of holidays including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, Kwanza, Earth Day, and many other multi-cultural celebrations. These festivities are celebrated with songs, dance, art projects, and sometimes food.

Three classroom parties are held during the year: Halloween, December holidays, and Valentine's Day. Celebrations for these holidays will be held for one hour at the end of the school day. Nutritious snacks will be served for all parties. Please see Wellness Policy at school office. Some special activity will be planned by parent helpers in coordination with the teacher. In seventh and eighth grades these celebrations may be held in the evening rather than during the school day. The student council will help to plan these celebrations.

Field Trips

Prairie Crossing Charter School is a school with an environmental focus. We provide a hands-on curriculum. With this philosophy, we engage in many field trips. Some of these trips involve walking and for others, parents volunteer to drive students. When feasible, a school bus is rented. Parents are asked to sign a field trip permission form at the beginning of the year for all field trips through out the year. A notice is sent home before each field trip describing the trip and asking for volunteers if needed.

Each family is asked to pay a books, materials, and activity fee at the beginning of the year. A portion of this is used to cover the cost of field trips. Parents will still be the primary funding source for those fieldtrips, upper grade level, which involve overnight and distant travel.

Prairie Crossing Learning Farm

Welcome to the 2007-2008 school year! We, the staff of the Prairie Crossing Learning Farm, are excited to continue providing farm-based, integrated education for PCCS for the 4th consecutive school year. Students from PCCS engage in a wide range of environmental education, and the Learning Farm offers a unique environment for students to experience aspects of their curriculum through hands-on activities related to food, farming, and land use. The information below is meant to help you familiarize yourself with student learning activities at the farm and to ensure that your child is well prepared.

The Mission of the Learning Farm

- The Prairie Crossing Learning Farm inspires young people and adults to understand the importance of healthy food, land, and community through experiential education and work on an organic farm.

Activities at the Farm

- Farm-Based Curriculum: Students at PCCS are engaged in a variety of activities at the Prairie Crossing Learning Farm, depending on the grade level and curriculum unit. We work closely with teachers to design activities that enhance the classroom curriculum through the lens of the farm environment. Activities focus on understanding the complex natural and social systems involved in raising plants and animals and caring for a diverse sustainable farm.

- Physical Exercise: When students engage in physical work on the Learning Farm, it is to complete a task important to the learning objectives. They often use a range of muscles, develop balance and coordination, raise their heart rate, and gain confidence and pride in their own strength and ability. Mild physical exercise at the farm is a valuable part of the students' experience at the farm and an important way to accomplish goals stated in the PCCS Wellness Policy.
- Farm to Table Lunches: Many growing projects at the farm culminate with students harvesting produce or eggs for a school-wide Farm to Table lunch, prepared and organized by parent volunteers. Each classroom prepares a presentation for the entire school during their month's lunch. This presentation allows them to synthesize and then share their learning. Parents are invited to attend Farm to Table lunches; sign-up forms are available on the PCCS website.

Location

Our unique location within the surrounding wetlands and prairies and organic farmland provides students with opportunities to observe and participate in farm activities throughout the entire school year. Our dedicated education facilities include:

- 3,000 square foot enclosed children's garden
- 3 acres of certified organic farm fields and surrounding habitat for diverse species
- 2,400 square foot heated greenhouse for in-ground growing projects from September through May
- 1,000 square foot heated greenhouse for plant propagation from January through May
- Henhouse and flock of 200 organic, free range laying hens
- Tool room and fleet of high quality hand tools for student use
- Use of the Yellow Farmhouse's three restrooms and four sinks with running hot and cold water
- A surrounding context of a profitable working organic farm, Sandhill Organics

Preparation for Farm Activities

Teachers will know in advance the farm activity schedule for their classroom, and will notify parents when appropriate. Students should come prepared for outdoor activities on those days.

- Gloves: The Learning Farm makes gloves available for students working on the farm
- Footwear: Closed-toe shoes are highly recommended to wear at the farm
- Clothing: Students should wear clothing and shoes that are okay to get dirty
- Weather Protection: Depending on the season, sunscreen and/or a hat, raingear, and coats, hats, and gloves are advised, as farm activities are cancelled only due to extreme weather
- Water: Students should bring their own water bottle for drinking water; these can be refilled at the farm

Learning Farm Agreements

- Respect people, plants, and animals
- Ask before picking or eating plants
- Watch your feet: stay on pathways
- Use tools properly

Parental Discretion

- PCCS parent requests that their child not go to the farm or not participate in a particular farm activity should be made to the appropriate PCCS teacher or administrator. The Learning Farm honors and respects any such request.

We look forward to seeing your children here at the Learning Farm!

Nicole Jain Capizzi, Manager

ncapizzi@prairiecrossing.com 874-548-4062 x 14

Brittany Futterman, Program Coordinator

bfutterman@prairiecrossing.com 847-548-4062 x 17

The mission statement of Prairie Crossing Charter School says that we use unique environmental and community resources in providing educational experiences for the students. Our vision says, “Children learn about the life cycles of animals and plants as well as the interdependence of life, including our use of plants and animals for food, through their observations, projects and real work on the farm, prairies, woodlands and wetlands that surround the school.” These statements make the Prairie Crossing Learning Farm an important destination for the students. At this farm they have the opportunity to grow crops that can be used for school lunches and help care for animals.

Children may come in contact with chickens while they are at the farm. Because of concerns surrounding Avian Influenza, the school’s administration requested information from the Prairie Crossing Learning Farm regarding their action plan to ensure the safety of the children when they come into contact with the chickens. This includes an assessment of how they would know if the chickens are infected and when they would advise the school not to allow the students to come into contact with the chickens. Their statement is provided here.

The Prairie Holdings Corporation is making available to PCCS students access to restrooms in the yellow farmhouse until classroom buildings are built and ready for occupancy. These restrooms are equipped with hot and cold running water.

Health & safety policy regarding chickens on the Prairie Crossing Learning Farm

Here at the farm, we are taking the potential threat of Avian Influenza seriously. Regarding the management of our flock of chickens, we are prepared to take whatever measures are necessary to protect the health of our community first and foremost, and of our chickens as far as they are possible. We are following the news regarding Avian Influenza throughout the world, and are prepared to progressively limit access to the henhouse or eliminate the flock altogether should the threat become great enough to warrant those measures.

We choose to raise our chickens in certified organic and free range system so they live happy, healthy lives, and so we may benefit from their highly nutritious, fresh, and wholesome eggs. Certified organic and free-range chickens must be provided with access to the outdoors and with certified organic feed that is free of animal by-products or pesticide residues. In this setting, our chickens are exposed to a wide variety of environmental conditions and encounters with wildlife. These conditions encourage healthy, disease-free birds that have naturally strong immune systems. In a free-range system, there is no way to prevent all possibility of transmission of disease organisms, including the Avian Influenza virus, if it should reach Lake County.

In its current healthy and natural state, our flock is of tremendous educational value to the many students and volunteers who care for and interact with the chickens, and to visitors. We will maintain the flock and continue to share the educational opportunities as well as the delicious eggs, as long as we feel it is safe to do so.

Those of us in daily contact with the chickens are aware of the possible physical symptoms of Avian Influenza or other common health problems, and are constantly watching for any signs of ill health in the flock. We will pay close attention to the health of our flock, to the international progress of the Avian Influenza, and to the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies so we can make informed decisions to ensure the safety of the community here at Prairie Crossing.

Nicole Jain Capizzi
Farm and Education Manager,
Prairie Crossing Learning Farm

Linda Wiens
Director, Prairie Crossing Institute

Water and Ice Activities

The curriculum at Prairie Crossing Charter School is centered on the environment. Because of this environmental emphasis, students are involved in a variety of outdoor activities including hikes, farm activities, and prairie burns. 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 may cause some parents concern. For this reason we present the following policy and provide a permission form for you to sign letting us know whether your child can take part in activities in the water or on ice.

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. Whenever students will be in the water or on ice there will be at least four adults present for each class involved (this provides for approximately one adult for every 5 children). As with any activity away from the school, staff members carry cell phones or walkie-talkies. Staff will also be familiarized with ice safety procedures at the beginning of each winter season.
3. Students in grades K-3 will not be allowed in water above two (2) feet and will not be permitted on ice if the ice plus the water below the ice are greater than two (2) feet total. Students in grade 4-8 will not be permitted in water above their heads.
4. Students will only be permitted on ice when the ice is greater than four (4) inches thick at the locations tested (as signified by the green flag on Lake Leopold). At the beginning of the winter season each year, staff will be instructed as to where the thickness of the ice is tested and locations where variations frequently occur. They will not go where ice is likely to be thinner.

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 sent home at least every two to three weeks, shared with parents during conferences or other special nights, 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 children's progress.

Homework

In general, homework at the lower grades is minimal due to the 7 ½ hour school day. Occasionally, homework will be assigned in kindergarten. Students in all other grades may have homework that

could include reading, math, spelling, and special projects. The volume of homework will increase as children progress into the upper grade levels.

At times, children will bring unfinished work home. It may be for a variety of reasons: the work was not completed because the child was not making good use of his/her time, the work was especially difficult and needs more time, or the child was absent and has to make up the work.

Personal Items

Children 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.

All children are required to participate in our trash free snack and lunch program. Please ask the classroom teacher if you need ideas for trash free snacks and lunches.

Children should also dress appropriately for the weather as we go outside every day, if possible. **It is required that raingear be stored in the bottom of your child's backpack and left there for rainy days.** You may also want to store mittens in the bottom of the backpack for unexpected cold weather. During the winter months, a warm coat, snow pants, water resistant mittens or gloves, boots, and a hat or hood are required.

The only other personal items allowed at school are those that teachers have asked to be used for special classroom projects or those allowed in accordance with the Electronic Devices and Valuables Policy. If the child wishes 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.

Lost and Found

Many teachers will have lost and found boxes in they're classrooms. Children 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 box, which is maintained in the office, near the end of the each season. **At the end of each season, all unclaimed items will be sent to an appropriate charitable organization.**

Lunch, Recess, and Snacks For Elementary Students

The staff at Prairie Crossing Charter School feel that children need to experience a relaxed and calm lunch and recess. To meet this goal, the following guidelines have been determined.

All children will be asked to wash their hands before lunch. A trash free lunch will be required of each child. Children will sit in groups of 2-4 and converse in moderate voices. Classical or folk music will be played during lunch for everyone's enjoyment. Each child will be asked to pick up after him/her self including throwing the remains of his/her lunch into the proper containers, wiping off his/her section of the table, and picking up crumbs under his/her chair and table. Children will have thirty minutes for lunch.

Children in grades 1-8 will have thirty minutes of recess. Children will need to play in the designated play area. School equipment must be handled with care. All children need to go out for recess unless they have a written excuse from their parents.

Children are encouraged to bring a trash free nutritious snack for mid morning or mid afternoon, depending on their lunch hour. They may bring juice in a reusable container.

Snacks and Recess for Kindergarten

All kindergartners are asked to bring a trash free nutritious snack in a reusable bag. Juice should be put in reusable containers as well as snacks. Please send a cloth napkin.

Weather permitting, all kindergartners have recess. It is required that a rain jacket be stored in the bottom of your child's backpack for unexpected rainy weather. The students will need to play in the designated playground area. School equipment must be handled with care. All children need to go out to recess unless they have a written excuse from their parents.

Expectations of Conduct

Expectations for All Students (Discipline Policy)

The goal of discipline at Prairie Crossing Charter School is to develop respect, self-discipline and responsibility in each student. As part of our focus of global citizenship, children learn to respect each other at school and then generalize that to all people in the world. As part of our environmental focus, we teach taking responsibility for care of our earth. We start this goal by teaching children to take responsibility for their own actions at Prairie Crossing Charter School.

Teachers, teacher's assistants and administrators shall maintain discipline in the school in order to keep students safe, protect the schools, staff and students' property and provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. Discipline is primarily conducted by engaging students in purposeful activities. Most inappropriate behavior can be avoided if students are involved in activities that make constructive use of their time and acceptable expectations are clearly defined for students. When disciplinary action is taken it is designed to be 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 rules:

Respect yourself, other children 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, other's belongings and school property.
6. Refrain from any activity that may be dangerous.

Take responsibility for your actions.

1. Apologize to people whom 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.

Accept consequences from staff. *(Before disciplinary action is taken, the student is given the opportunity to explain the conduct.)*

1. Receive a verbal warning from a staff member and/or rectifying the situation by making the circumstances better as the situation warrants. This may include removal from the situation and loss of privileges.
2. Writing a letter home explaining the behavior. Parents need to respond in writing back to the teacher. The letter must be returned the next day.
3. For repeated minor infractions (three times or at teacher's discretion), go to the principal's office for a discussion and notification of parents.

<p align="center">Minor Infractions</p> <p><i>Consequences listed in the “Accept Consequences” section above.</i> <i>Potential talk with principal.</i> <i>Potential loss of privilege (e.g. lunch with class)</i></p>	<p align="center">Serious Infractions</p> <p><i>Talk with principal and parental notification.</i> <i>Potential loss of privileges (e.g. lunch with class) for a number of days.</i> <i>Potential in-school suspension.</i> Possible reports to law enforcement authorities.</p>	<p align="center">Major Infractions</p> <p><i>Potential in-school suspension.</i> <i>Potential expulsion.</i> <i>All major infractions must be reported to the administration.</i> Out of school suspensions for acts of aggression, theft, and possession of illegal substances and/or goods. Reports to law enforcement officials will be made.</p>
Tardiness	Repeated minor infractions.	False fire alarm, tampering with apparatus.
Inappropriate dress (see Student Dress Policy).	Plagiarism, cheating, forgery.	Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, controlled substances, “look-alike” drugs, or drug paraphernalia. Students who are under the influence of any prohibited substance will be treated as though they had drugs in their possession.
Inappropriate public displays of affection.	Vandalism, defacing and/or destruction of personal or school property.	Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon.
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.
	Leaving school grounds without permission.	
Written or verbal vulgar or profane language.	Possession of inappropriate written, visual or audio materials or use of the Internet to find or distribute such materials.	Using or possessing legal medication, over the counter or prescription, not approved by the office. Distributing, purchasing, or selling legal medication.
Use of electronic equipment or failure to have it turned off during school hours.	Failure to attend school without valid cause.	Arson
Teasing, name calling	Defiance of authority	Bomb threat
Failure to follow classroom rules	Theft or possession of stolen property	

These grounds for disciplinary action, including those described more thoroughly later in this policy apply 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 the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or if the behavior may reasonably cause school authorities to forecast substantial injury or disruption or material interference with school-related activities or the rights of other students or school personnel or the risk of the same.

Weapons

In accordance with School Code, a student who possesses, uses, distributes, purchases, or sells an explosive, firearm, or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon shall be expelled for at least one calendar year. The expulsion period may, however, be modified by the 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, 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.

The principal or designee shall notify the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school. The principal will also notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Bullying

Bullying is defined as one or more individuals inflicting physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on another individual or individuals. Bullying takes many forms and can include many different behaviors, including, but not limited to, physical violence and attacks; verbal taunts, name-calling, and put-downs, including, but not limited to, ethnically-based verbal abuse and gender-based put-downs; threats and intimidation; extortion or stealing of money and possessions; and ostracization from the peer group.

Every student has the right to a secure, comfortable, and positive environment free from threat, harassment, and any form of bullying behavior in which to grow in knowledge and understanding. Therefore, hazing, bullying, menacing, or abuse of students will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in an act or conduct that injures, degrades, demeans, belittles, or disgraces another student, or interferes with a student's opportunity to learn or derive educational benefit shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. This may include suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement authorities.

Gangs and Gang-related Activities

Student involvement in gangs or gang-related activities, including the display of gang symbols or paraphernalia, on school property or at school-related events is strictly prohibited. Any student who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension, or

out of school suspension, or expulsion. Further reports to law enforcement authorities will be made.

As used herein, the term gang shall mean any organization, club, or group composed wholly or in part of students and which is assembled for the common purpose or design of committing or conspiring to commit criminal offenses; engaging in conduct that is contrary to the public good; and engaging in conduct that interferes with, or disrupts, the district's educational process or programs.

As used herein, the phrase gang-related activity shall mean any conduct engaged in by a student on behalf of a gang to perpetuate the existence of any gang and to effect the common purpose and design of any gang including, without limitation, recruiting students for membership in any gang and/or threatening or intimidating other students or employees to commit acts or omissions against their will in furtherance of the common purpose and design of any gang.

Required Notices

A school staff member shall immediately notify the principal or director in the event that he or she (1) observes any person in possession of a firearm on or around school grounds unless immediate notice would endanger students under his or her 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. Upon receiving such a report, the principal, director, or their designee shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency, Illinois State Police, and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). **To assure uniform notice to the parent community, the director or designee shall advise the parent community of any serious legitimate threat to the security of the school environment. The notice shall include the actions taken by the administration to the extent feasible while protecting the identity of student(s) involved in the incident.**

Delegation of Authority

Each teacher, and any other school personnel when students are under his or her charge, 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 principal or director in the event that he or she observes a student committing a 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, teacher 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 give a verbal warning to students. If any other disciplinary action is needed, the volunteer will notify a teacher, teacher assistant, or other person providing a

related service for or with respect to a student. Volunteers may not impose any disciplinary measure other than to give a verbal warning to students.

The director and principal may suspend students guilty of serious or major infractions up to 10 consecutive school days provided the appropriate procedures are followed. All suspensions will be served outside of the classroom but in the school. Students serving suspension may not attend any school functions during the time of the suspension. The Board of Directors may suspend a student 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 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 designee 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, he or she 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 his or her 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.

Discipline of Special Education Student

Prairie Crossing Charter School shall comply with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when disciplining students. More details regarding discipline of special education students can be found in Section 13 of Prairie Crossing Charter School's Special Education Policies and Procedures.

No special education student shall be expelled if the student's particular major infraction is a manifestation of his or her disability. Any special education student whose major infraction is not a manifestation of his or her disability may be expelled pursuant to the expulsion procedures described above, except that such disabled student shall continue to receive educational services as provided in the IDEA.

Any special education student who has or will exceed 10 days of suspension may be temporarily excluded from school by court order or by order of a duly appointed State of Illinois hearing officer if Prairie Crossing Charter School demonstrates that maintaining the student in his or her current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

A special education student who has carried a weapon to school or to a school function or who knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs commits an act that causes serious bodily injury or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function may be removed from his or her current placement. The term "serious bodily injury" is defined in Section 1365(h)(3) of Title 18, U.S. Code, to mean a bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. Such a student shall be placed in an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for no more than 45 days in accordance with the IDEA.

-adopted by the Prairie Crossing Charter School Board
20 June 2006

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 are encouraged to discuss the matter with the director or principal. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same gender. If the director and principal are 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 director or principal for appropriate action.

The director or designee shall also use reasonable measure 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

If any student, parent/guardian, or employee, or any member of the public, believes that he or she has been the victim of unlawful discrimination, including harassment, by a member of the Board, one of its employees, agents or students, such individual may file a complaint with the Complaint Coordinator pursuant to the school's 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, sex, actual or potential marital or parental status, or other legally protected group status.

The Complaint Coordinator for the school is the Director. In the event that the Director is the individual accused of discrimination or harassment, the Complainant may file his or her complaint with the Principal. The Principal shall immediately forward any complaint filed against the Director to the President of the Board.

A complete copy of the Uniform Grievance Procedure is available from the office.

Student Dress Code

Children should dress appropriately for the weather as we go outside every day if possible. We encourage students to wear shoes that are good for walking and running; they may not wear open-toed shoes or shoes that do not have backs. Short shorts (arm & thumb length is used as a reference), short skirts (less than finger-tip length) spaghetti strap tops, midriff shirts (any shirt that reveals abdominal area), halter tops, and clothing which reveals undergarments are not considered appropriate. Straps on tops should be at least one inch thick. Exceptions for formal wear worn to the 8th grade graduation are subject to administration approval. No clothing may promote smoking, alcohol, drugs, violence, cults, or groups, which advocate violence or drugs. The administration is the final authority in determining the appropriateness of student attire. Coats and jackets normally may not be worn in the classroom. Hats and bandanas may be worn in the school; teachers can set their own rules for when hats or bandanas are appropriate. Students must remove hats and bandanas indoors when requested to do so by a staff member in accordance with the classroom teacher's policy.

It is required that raingear be stored in the bottom of your child's backpack and left there for rainy days. You may also want to store mittens in the bottom of the backpack for unexpected cold weather. During the winter months, a warm coat, snow pants, water resistant mittens or gloves, boots, and a hat or hood are required.

PCCS Athletic Code of Conduct

Participation in an extracurricular 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 specials)
- Students are not allowed to play 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, teacher, supervisors are responsible for letting athletes and parent know about ineligible students by phone or email

The Special Education Program

PCCS is committed to providing the support needed so that all of our students can grow to their full potential. The school has a part time special education director, a full time special education teacher, and numerous contracted specialists to serve students with special needs. Teacher assistance teams (TAT) consisting of the special education director, the special education teacher, the classroom teacher, the teacher assistant, appropriate specialists, and others as

appropriate meet regularly to ensure that students are receiving the help they need and that staff are obtaining support in helping students reach their goals. The procedures for determining whether a child needs special education services and which services are needed are provided here.

1. A parent, teacher, or other person who believes that a student may require special education services may refer that student for a special education case study evaluation. The referring party will be requested to meet with the district's director of special education or the director of special education's designee to explain their concerns about the student. The referring party will be required to put their request in writing and date their request. This written request will then serve as the official start of the case study evaluation process.
2. The Director of Special Education will review the written referral for special education with the teacher assistance team (TAT). If a case study evaluation is determined appropriate, a letter will be sent to the parent within ten (10) school days stating such along with a copy of "explanation of procedural safeguards available to parents of students with disabilities." Parents must sign a permission form in order for the school to conduct the case study evaluation. The state mandated form will identify the educational domains to be evaluated.
3. If a case study is determined not appropriate a letter will be sent to the parent stating such along with a copy of the "explanation of procedural safeguards available to parents of students with disabilities." Should the parents disagree with this decision it will be incumbent upon the school district to make a request for a due process hearing in order to resolve the dispute regarding the appropriateness of a case study evaluation.
4. Upon completion of a case study evaluation, but no later than 60 school days following the date of obtaining consent to conduct the case study evaluation (or prior to the first day of the next school year, if there are less than 60 school days remaining in the current school year), a Multidisciplinary Conference (MDC) will be convened to determine whether the student is eligible for special education services. If eligible, an individual education plan (IEP) will be written. The writing of the IEP may take place at the MDC or an IEP meeting may be convened at a later, mutually agreed upon date and time. The IEP will describe the educational program and services the student requires to meet his/her educational goals. The parent/guardian then signs consent for initial special education placement. Implementation of the IEP will occur within ten (10) school days after the parents have been provided notice of the placement unless otherwise agreed by the IEP team.
5. If not eligible, the special education identification evaluation process ends and additional interventions will be considered in the general education classroom.
6. A report of the MDC and IEP meeting or meetings will be prepared in compliance with Special Education Policies and Procedures. A copy of the report will be placed in the child's temporary education record. A copy of the report will also be provided to the parents.
7. If a parent has an evaluation conducted by an evaluator not employed by PCCS and wishes to have this report considered as part of the MDC, PCCS will request a copy of the evaluation and obtain consent for release of the information from the private evaluator. Upon receipt of the report, PCCS will, within ten (10) school days, send written notice of a MDC. At the meeting PCCS will consider the results of the evaluation

in any decision made with respect to the child's free appropriate public education (FAPE).

8. Transfer Students – If a child receiving special education services transfers to PCCS, PCCS will ensure FAPE by providing special education and related services in conformity with an IEP. PCCS shall immediately enroll and initiate educational services. PCCS may adopt the former school district's IEP. This does not require an IEP meeting if a copy of the current IEP is available, the parents indicate satisfaction with the current IEP, and PCCS determines that the current IEP is appropriate and can be implemented as written.
9. PCCS may develop a new IEP for the child if PCCS or the parents do not believe the current IEP is appropriate. In such a case, PCCS shall, within ten days after the date of the child's enrollment, initiate an IEP meeting for the purpose of developing the new IEP. While the new IEP is under development, PCCS shall implement the IEP from the former school district.
10. Reevaluation – PCCS shall reevaluate an eligible student whenever conditions warrant but at least once every three years. For a reevaluation, the TAT will meet to determine whether additional evaluation data is needed or not needed for continuing eligibility for special education.
11. If the team determines that additional evaluation data is needed, the parent will be asked to give signed consent to collect this data.
12. If the team determines that no additional evaluation data is needed, the parent/guardian will be asked to indicate agreement or disagreement. If the parent/guardian indicates agreement, the team can then proceed with eligibility determination and the development of the individual education plan. If the parent/guardian indicate disagreement, the "explanation of procedural safeguards for parents of students with disabilities" is referenced and discussed.
13. Procedural Safeguards – All procedural safeguards, including right to administrative remedy, mediation, and impartial due process, as required through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Illinois School Code, shall be applicable to the resolution of disputes involving referral, evaluation, and the individual education plans.

Miscellaneous

School wide Communication Procedures

Parents play an integral role in the educational experience of the children 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.

To keep parents well informed, there will be a weekly school newsletter, weekly class letter, and notices regarding any changes or special events that are happening. Newsletters are sent by email to parents electing this option. Periodic phone calls, two scheduled conferences per year plus informal conferencing at the parent's request, and three progress reports will keep parents apprised of their children's progress in school. Ongoing information may be obtained from the school web page – www.pccs.ws

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

School Calendar

The school calendar is set each year by the staff, approved by the Board of Education, with final approval from the Illinois State Board of Education. In general, Prairie Crossing Charter School has between 184 to 190 school attendance days. Each year's calendar is printed independently.

School Closure for Inclement Weather

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 due to inclement weather. We will try whenever possible to open school at the normal time and keep children in school until the normal dismissal time. However please understand emergencies related to heating, water for sanitation and/or electricity can affect the timeliness of our notices. Emergencies happen!

However, we realize that there may be times when we need to close because of snow or extreme cold. The administration will make a decision regarding closing school, delaying the opening time, or closing early due to inclement weather no later than 6:00 a.m. Parents, students and staff can check the status of PCCS in the following ways:

- Go to emergency closings at www.emergencyclosings.com and search for PCCS by typing the name and city or by the main phone number of the facility
- Call 847-238-1234 from a touch-tone phone and enter the main phone number of PCCS
- Receive an e-mail notification of a change made to PCCS by signing up on emergency closings at www.emergencyclosings.com
- Listen to WGN Radio 720-AM, WBBM Radio 780-AM, or watch CBS Ch. 2, NBC Ch. 5, ABC Ch. 7, FOX 32, WGN-TV or CLTV cable for closing information.

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 him or her at home and call the school to report the absence.

Tornado Drills

Periodic tornado drills will be held during the school year. Classes will receive the signal over the intercom system. At that time classes will proceed to the designated areas within the building. The classroom teachers will indicate these areas to their class.

Fire Drills

The school is required to have **three** fire drills per school year. Some of the drills will not have advanced notice and may happen in inclement weather. Each classroom has a floor plan of the

building showing the routes and exits to be used for fire drills. All faculty members have been asked to post this floor plan in their room. Students must become familiar with this plan for each room they will occupy during the school day.

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. Parents may always have access to these files.

For more specific information, please contact the school office for the Board of Education School Records Policy.

Board of Directors

The Board of Education is composed of volunteers who are dedicated to the vision described in the Prairie Crossing Charter School Charter. The Board has nine members. Of these, three are elected by the parents; the Board elects the remainders. The term for each Board member is three years. Parents of Prairie Crossing Charter School students have been a majority of the Board from its inception, and the PCCS bylaws now require that at least five board members be parents of children currently enrolled at PCCS. The Board meets once a month on the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Meetings are held at the Prairie Crossing Charter School, in the Anna Botsford Comstock Building. If the meeting is to be held elsewhere, a notice is posted on the front door of the school. All agendas for the Board meetings are posted on the front door of the Kennicott and on the door where the meeting is to be held and on the school's website at least 48 hours before the meeting. For exact dates and times, please check the school web page www.pccs.ws. Please see the front of this handbook for current Board members, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.

Staff

The staff at Prairie Crossing Charter School meets all credential requirements as outlined in the Charter School Law of 1996. Teachers have either an Illinois Teacher's Certificate, or a college degree and 5 years related job experience. Prairie Crossing Charter School prides itself on its excellent staff of professional educators who are dedicated to providing the best possible education for the children of PCCS. For current information on staff, please see the school web page at www.pccs.ws.

Parent-Staff Organization

The Parent-Staff Organization was founded to serve the Prairie Crossing Charter School Community. It serves 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. PSO officers for 2007-2008 are listed in the front of the handbook. For more information about the PSO, please contact the school office.