



Early Childhood Parent and Student Handbook

Our Parent and Student Handbook has been prepared to help you become better acquainted with many of the policies and operations of Prior Lake Schools. Please read it carefully and become familiar with its contents. Students/Families are responsible for knowing the guidelines and policies. Each school year parents/guardians will be required to sign off that they have reviewed the following policies, procedures and required notices included in the handbook.

Contact Information

Early Childhood Programs		
Main Line: 952-226-0950	Attendance Line: 952-226-0958	Fax Line: 952-226-0949

Erin Metoxen , Early Childhood (ECFE/CoF/Screening) Coordinator; emetoxen@plsas.org / 952.226.0908	Lori Parker , Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Coordinator; lparker@plsas.org / 952.226.0986
Julie Miller , EC Admin Assistant; jumiller@plsas.org / 952.226.0952	Mel Owen , ECSE Admin. Assistant; mowens@plsas.org / 952.226.0980
Ann-Marie Nopola , EC Admin Assistant; anopola@plsas.org / 952.226.0956	Deb Tribby , Screening Admin Assistant; dtribby@plsas.org / 952.226.0675
Ami Fimreite , Family Outreach Worker afimreite@plsas.org / 952.226.0916	Joel Dahl , Director of Community Education Services; joeldahl@plsas.org / 952.226.0312

Email: All staff can receive communication via district email. Staff member's first initial, last name @plsas.org (Example: Jane Doe at jdoe@plsas.org)

Important District Policies

Please read the following document that contains important district policy information. [Click HERE](#)

Welcome to PLSAS Early Learning Programs!

We believe that:

- Play is a child's most important work!
- Families are partners in learning and are key to bridging home and school
- Children learn through hands-on engagement with their environment.
- Children's learning is a cooperative effort within their community.
- Children grow in self-awareness through interactions with others.
- Children develop a positive attitude toward lifelong learning by trying new things.
- Children are unique and deserve the respect of an individualized education.

Arrival/Dismissal

Edgewood:

- Morning Preschool: 9:00-11:30 am
Start to line up for drop off at 8:50 am and pick up at 11:20 am
- Afternoon Preschool: 1:00-3:30 pm
Start to line up for drop off at 12:40 pm and pick up at 3:20 pm

Jeffers Pond Hours:

- Morning Class: 8:30-11:00 am
Start to line up for drop off at 8:20 am and pick up at 10:50 am
- Afternoon Class: 12:45-3:15 pm
Start to line up for drop off at 12:35 pm and pick up at 3:05 pm
- All Day Class Drop off 7:00 am
Pick up by 4:30 pm

Curbside Drop-off Procedures

- Pull as far forward along the sidewalk as possible but DO NOT pull around other cars in line.
- Please use caution when entering school property. There may be young children in the parking lot.
- Display your assigned number sign in the front passenger visor so it is visible from the school entrance. You will receive the sign before school.
- Ensure that your car seat is on the rear passenger side of the vehicle.
- *Students are only released on the curb side.*
- Parents unbuckle your child if they are unable to do so themselves.
- Staff will open the car door and walk the child into the building.

- For the safety of our preschoolers, they can ONLY be released from their vehicle by staff. Do not let children enter the building by themselves.

Curbside Pick up Procedures

- Display your assigned number sign in the front passenger visor window so it is visible from the school entrance. You will receive the sign before school.
- Staff will open the curb side door and assist your child into their seat and close the door. If your child is unable to buckle independently, please follow the listed Buckle Zone procedure.

Buckle Zone

- If your child needs assistance buckling after they have been brought to your vehicle, pull forward to the designated area next to the playground to assist them, indicated by the “Buckle Zone” sign.

Important Notes

- Parents/guests will not be allowed to accompany their child to the classroom.
- Please make every effort to arrive before the drop off/pick up time ends. If you do arrive late, please park and bring your child to the main office. If late arrivals become chronic, we may need to make alternative enrollment plans.
- Authorized Pick-Up: If someone other than a guardian or emergency contact is picking up your child, send the preschool office and your teacher an email with the person’s full name and phone number. This new adult should be prepared to show a photo ID.

Maps for Pick-up and Drop-off

- [Edgewood Lower Level](#)
- [Edgewood Upper Level](#)
- [Jeffers Pond Elementary](#)

Attendance

Regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work and benefits students socially. The school board recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent/guardian, teacher and administrators.

Dismissal during the day: Parents/guardians are asked to send a note with their child prior to appointments and vacations, etc. For your child’s safety, please include the name of the person picking up your child if it is someone other than the parent/guardian. They will be asked to show a photo ID. Whoever picks up the child will be required to sign them out at the office.

Family Activity: We understand that students may need to be absent from school occasionally to participate in family activities or vacations. Please notify your child’s classroom teacher and the attendance line well ahead of time when you know your child will be absent due to a planned family activity/vacation. Tuition is charged as usual; there are no vacation days from tuition. Your child’s progress depends upon consistent attendance and access to all educational programming

Chronic Absence: The majority of our classes have a wait list. Should a student become chronically absent as determined by the program for any reason, their spot may be forfeited to the next family on the list in order to maximize the benefit of the spot. You will receive notification

in writing of this possibility and the opportunity to improve attendance before the slot is given to another child.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Accountable for regular attendance and for following the attendance policy.
2. Limit absences by scheduling appointments, vacations, etc. after school or on non-school days.
3. Notify the office before an extended absence occurs by calling the attendance line (952-226-0958), emailing your child’s teacher or writing a note for your child’s teacher.
4. Preschool tuition is still required during absences.
5. Contact the office and/or teacher if you have any concerns about your child's attendance.

Weather Cancellations

Information about school closing is available on the school webpage, WCCO radio (830 AM) and KARE 11 television station. **In the event of school cancellation there will be no preschool. If there is a two hour school late start there will be no morning preschool. In the event classes are not held they will not be rescheduled and will not be refunded.**

Birthdays

Due to allergies, socioeconomic and nutritional concerns, we ask that students refrain from bringing in treats on their birthday. You may honor your student by purchasing a “birthday book” for the Media Center or make a donation to the Prior Lake-Savage Area Education Foundation in your child’s name.

We ask that students do not bring birthday invitations to school to respect the feelings of students who have not been invited to the party. We also ask that students do not give gifts of any kind to others at school.

Building Security

The main office will be open during school hours. All other doors will be locked when not in use by students and staff. Parents of Kids’ Company students will have access to the Kids’ Company entrance to the building through use of a code on a keypad. All employees wear district name badges. Volunteers and visitors are required to sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge when in the building. Adults who are not wearing an appropriate identification badge will be stopped by staff and questioned about their purpose in the building. The building will practice the following drills throughout the school year with students onsite: five fire drills, a tornado drill and five lockdown drills. Security procedures are also in place should students ever need evacuation to another site.

In Early Learning Programs, we practice “Stop, Look, Listen, & Do.” We strongly believe that it is pivotal to avoid inflicting any emotional trauma in a practice or real emergency situation by focusing on what is most important for staff and student safety. Classrooms teach this method for all emergency situations in all settings:

We STOP what we are doing, LOOK at our teacher, LISTEN to their words, and DO what they ask quietly.



Calendar

The Circle of Friends Preschool program calendar is linked [HERE](#) and can be found on the school district website, under Our Schools-Circle of Friends Preschool-Calendar.

Celebrations

Throughout the school year all PLSAS schools will have various celebrations that may include student learning, the seasons, ESTEM, and special school events. While we will not hold parties for Halloween, Winter Holidays or Valentine's Day, we will provide a variety of celebrations and special events, with some that will include volunteer opportunities for family members.

Events and celebrations will be communicated by your child's teacher or through the school office. We will honor and respect family traditions and holidays and invite students and families to share their traditions in our classrooms and program. We look forward to a year of learning and a year of celebrating students and families!

Communication

You are encouraged to communicate with us at any time you have comments or questions about your child's education or the school. There are several ways you can stay in touch with us. School phone systems have voicemail available for all licensed staff.

Reporting

Parent/teacher conferences will be conducted in the fall and spring. Report cards will be sent home and are available to custodial and non-custodial guardians electronically via Infinite Campus unless the office has legal documents stating otherwise.

Ongoing parent-teacher communication is encouraged. Informal conferences, questions, expressions of concern, etc. can be addressed by phone, email or in person at any time that is convenient for all involved. Communication will also be facilitated through classroom newsletters, calendars and monthly building newsletters.

School Messenger

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools also communicates with families using SchoolMessenger. All families that have an email address and phone number registered with the district will receive periodic communications about school related events, emergencies, school closures and links to

other pertinent information. This information will be communicated through emails, text messages and phone recordings.

Rapid Connects

The high speed dialing system, Rapid Connects, is the system in place to reach parents quickly during an early release day due to weather or in the event of a school emergency. The Rapid Connects phone system has the ability to automatically send a voice message to all of our students' parents/guardians on up to three phone numbers per student within minutes. Outside of the district to communicate in a timely fashion, fewer staff will be needed to pass along key information.

SeeSaw

SeeSaw is a digital portfolio tool that empowers students/teachers to create, share and collaborate with families. You will be able to see your child's work in one place along with important classroom updates and information from the school office. You will be able to access your child's portfolio via the free SeeSaw Family App, or by logging on to SeeSaw on any device. As a family member, you will receive notifications anytime your child's work samples, photos or information is added to their portfolio or important information is posted.

Court Orders/Court Papers

Please provide our school office with any current copies of court papers/orders that legally restrict a parent or family from having contact with your child or releasing your child to that family member or guardian. We can only enforce a current copy of court papers that we have been provided.

Curriculum

Our preschool staff utilizes Creative Curriculum, which includes Social Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Language, Literacy, Math, & Science. Curriculum takes place in investigations, or studies, including children's interest areas. Most importantly, we follow a consistent, predictable routine and learn through PLAY!

Assessment

The preschool staff utilizes TS Gold, which is tied to our 4 Star Parent Aware rating. Results are shared with families at parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring of each year. We welcome your questions or concerns at any time and encourage you consult with staff whenever you wish. Our staff will work hard to keep you informed of your child's progress throughout the year.

Pyramid Model

- All staff trained in promoting positive social-emotional competence in young children.
- Pyramid Rules posted and used building wide
- Link to [Pyramid Family Fact Sheet](#)

Diversity

Students in PLSAS represent many cultures, races, origins and ethnicities. Student also choose to represent themselves in many ways perhaps by interests, clothing preferences, activities or friendship groups. It is our belief that each student and family should be respected for their

differences and how they choose to represent themselves and should not be subjected to ridicule or rejection from others. All students and staff are expected to be tolerant of these differences and accepting of this diverse school community.

Dress/Lost & Found

Please keep an extra set of clothing (including underpants and socks), in your child's backpack each day. Dress your child for mess and movement! Appropriate or recommended attire includes:

- Tennis shoes (Flip-flops & open back shoes present a safety concern. Dress in tennis shoes when possible.)
- Pants that your child is able to independently snap and buckle
- Shorts under dresses and skirts
- Avoid Belts
- Parents are encouraged to label everything (clothing, footwear, backpacks, etc.) with your child's first and last name
- Lost and Found is located in storage near the main office

Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is a FREE developmental screening required for all preschool-age children by the State of Minnesota prior to entry in kindergarten and some early childhood programs. The optimum age to screen is 3 ½ but children can be screened between ages 3 and 5. Screening benefits both children and their families.

3 Reasons to Screen at Age 3:

1. Early screening can help set your child up for success in school.
2. Any health or learning concerns can be identified early so intervention can be provided before the start of kindergarten.
3. Because screening is FREE and provides a snapshot of your child's health and development.

You can find additional information and schedule a screening appointment [HERE](#) or by contacting Deb Tribby at dtribby@plsas.org or 952.226.0975.

Early Learning Advisory Council

According to Minnesota Statute 121.882, (1984) the school board of any district establishing or expanding an early childhood family education program "shall appoint an advisory council for the area in which the program is provided. A majority of the council shall be parents participating in the program. The council shall assist the board in developing, planning and monitoring the early childhood family education program. The council shall report to the school board and the community education advisory council."

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The purpose of the council is to advise and support the Early Childhood Family Center staff and Building Principal in identifying, developing, planning and evaluating programs and services to

meet the early education needs of families of children birth to kindergarten. To support, promote and advocate for the early childhood programs and functions within and outside of the facility.

Emergency Names, Phone Numbers & Email Addresses

It is crucial that current work and cell phone numbers are in Infinite Campus so we can contact families in an emergency. This is also true for other emergency contacts. *For your child's welfare, please keep us informed of any changes so that we are able to reach you if needed.*

If you are going to be out of town and another adult is responsible for your child, it is important that we are aware of these changes in writing prior to your absence. In the event of an emergency if we are unable to reach you or the emergency contact person(s), we will call 911 for immediate assistance. It is critically important that we have current data on file.

Outdoor Learning

We encourage students to dress for the weather. **Students will always go outdoors for recess unless the "Feels Like" temperature falls below a -5 degrees F or it is steadily raining.** All early childhood/elementary schools will check the local weather forecast using weather.com or similar website to determine the "Feels Like" temperature.

If a child cannot go outdoors due to a health condition, please send a note to the classroom teacher or office so that alternate arrangements can be made. [Click HERE](#) for link for Outdoor Clothing Guide

SUNSCREEN + BUG REPELLENT

If you would like your child to use sunscreen or bug spray during COF preschool, you must provide sunscreen lotion and/or bug spray with your child's name written on the bottle. This product will remain in their locker. Your child will be responsible for applying the sunscreen lotion or bug spray, with direct staff supervision."

Toilet Independence

Toilet Independence

While we understand accidents occasionally happen, preschoolers must be fully independent in the bathroom to attend Circle of Friends Preschool. Preschool staff may not change soiled clothing.

In the event of a wetting accident, staff may verbally guide a student through changing clothes. If there is a bowel movement accident, the school nurse may support a child if they are available. If not, a parent or other caregiver will be called to come to school to change the child. Use the guide chart to the right to help your child learn bathroom independence.

If accidents become a chronic occurrence, we will first work with parents to create a support plan for the child. If the issue continues, we reserve the right to discontinue programming until the issue is resolved.



Health Guidelines

If you have any health related concerns for your child such as medication or a chronic health concern, please contact the health office. [District Health Services Webpage](#)

Program Policies

Withdrawal Policy: Registration fees and first month's tuition are not refundable.

Withdrawals Policy (before the school year begins): If we are notified of a student withdrawal *prior to May 1st*, the first month's tuition will not be charged. After May 1st, refunds will be based on the program's ability to fill the vacancy. If we are able to fill the spot before the first day of preschool, a full refund will be issued for the first month's tuition. If the spot is still empty once school begins, the first month's tuition will be forfeited in order to cover program operating costs.

Withdrawals Policy (during the school year): A 30-day written notice to the preschool office at Edgewood School is required. Families are responsible to pay full tuition for the month of withdrawal.

Late Pick-Up Policy: It is extremely important that you pick up your child at the time stated for your class. We reserve the right to charge a \$15.00 late fee for each five minute increment that a child is not picked up. We do understand that the curb-side pick up process may be delayed, and reserve the right to waive the late fee for circumstances deemed outside of your control.