

# Prices Fork Elementary School

# Connections

2023-2024 School Year  
Parent Handbook

**Program Coordinator: Emily Strom**

**Connections Phone: 540-558-3739**

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*Montgomery County Public Schools does not discriminate in its programs and activities for reasons of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, age, or on any other basis prohibited by law. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:*

*Director of Human Resources and Assistant Superintendent for Operations  
750 Imperial Street SE Christiansburg, VA 24073  
(540) 382-5100*

## Connections Philosophy

The Connections Program seeks to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for elementary school aged children to learn, explore, and grow in individual, small group, and classwide settings. Children will have opportunities to socialize with their peers, explore hobbies, and discover new passions in a positive and safe learning environment.

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\*\*\*Pages 1-10 should be kept for your records. Please fill out pages 11-14 completely, then detach and return.\*\*\*

\*\*\*If your child was enrolled in our Summer 2023 program, and all the information remains the same, you do not need to fill out the emergency contact or medical form again. Please fill out and return a new enrollment agreement and registration form\*\*\*

## ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Parents/Guardians are required to read the parent handbook in its entirety before filling out and returning all registration forms. Online copies of the parent handbook and registration forms may be obtained under the Connections tab on the Prices Fork Elementary School website. Physical copies may be obtained in the front office or in the Connections room. Completed forms may be returned to the front office, the child’s classroom teacher, or by email. Once all forms have been returned and reviewed by our staff, and the registration fee has been paid, you will be notified by email to confirm your child's enrollment in our program. Enrollment is taken throughout the year in accordance with space availability. Admission to the Connections program is made on a first come first serve basis and is limited by available staffing. Safety and appropriate supervision ratios will be used to determine whether space is available. Admission can be denied or retracted if any student’s admission and/or attendance will create a safety concern or an overload for the current staffing. Children’s records will be treated confidentially.

### Legal Paperwork

For legal purposes, the Connections Program must have legal paperwork on file regarding custody matters.

### Program Costs

<b>One time Registration Fee</b> (if you have paid in previous years, you do not need to pay this fee again)	\$30 for the first child, \$50 for 2 children, and \$10 after that.
<b>AM &amp; PM Care</b>	\$70.00 Weekly
<b>AM Care ONLY</b>	\$40.00 Weekly
<b>PM Care ONLY</b>	\$50.00 Weekly
<b>Hourly Flex Card (For Occasional Use)</b>	\$150 for 20 Hours
<b>Teacher Work Day Rate</b>	\$35 Per Day
*There is a 10% sibling discount (on all rates) to be taken off the price of the 2nd (or more) child.*	

### Payments:

Payment for that day (or week) is due when your child is dropped off. You may pay in cash, by check (made out to PFES), or by credit card on myschoolbucks.com. Delinquent accounts may result in dismissal from the program.

## Schedule and Hours of Operation

- **Connections Hours:** The Connections program is open from **7:00am-8:45am** and from **3:45 pm-6:00 pm** during school days and from **7:30am-5:30pm** on teacher work days.
- **School Closings and Delays:** Connections hours of operation during unplanned school closures/delays are made on a case by case basis by the program director and administration. The safety of our children and staff are always our top priority. Our hours during these days will be communicated via email as soon as the decision is made.
- **AM Drop Off:** Parents/Guardians are **required** to stay with their child until a staff member is aware that they have arrived and the child has entered the building. Your child may be dropped off at any point after 7:00. If we are not in the classroom, there will be a sign on the door providing our current location.
- **PM Pick up:** Anyone other than parents **must** provide identification and be an authorized contact in order to pick-up children. Your child may be picked up at any point before 6:00. If we are not in the classroom, there will be a sign on the door providing our current location.

### Daily Schedule:

<b>Morning Session</b>	
<b>7:00-8:00</b>	Freetime in Connections Classrooms
<b>8:00-8:30</b>	Kids Choice: Gym or Freetime
<b>8:30-8:45</b>	Chromebook Time (Grades 3-5) or Storytime (Grades K-2)
<b>Afternoon Session</b>	
<b>3:45-4:00</b>	Snack/Homework Time
<b>4:00-4:30</b>	Freetime in Connections Classrooms
<b>4:30-4:45</b>	Group Activity (Grades 3-5) or Storytime (Grades K-2)
<b>4:45-5:30</b>	Gym/Playground Time
<b>5:30-6:00</b>	Chromebook/Technology Time

## 2023-24 Calendar

<b>Fall 2023</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Connections will be...</b>
Teacher Workday	Monday, August 14	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Tuesday, August 15	<b>Closed</b>
Holiday	Monday, September 4	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Friday, September 25	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Teacher Workday	Friday, October 13	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Early Dismissal	Thursday, October 26	<b>Open</b> 1:15-6:00
Teacher Workday	Tuesday, November 7	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Fall Break	Wed-Fri November 22-24	<b>Closed</b>
Winter Break	Thurs-Fri December 21-29	<b>Closed</b>

<b>Spring 2024</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Connections will be...</b>
Winter Break	Mon-Wed January 1-3	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Thursday, January 4	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Teacher Workday	Friday, January 5	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Holiday	Monday, January 15	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Friday, February 9	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Holiday	Monday, February 19	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Wednesday, March 13	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Spring Break	Thurs-Mon, March 28-April 1	<b>Closed</b>
Teacher Workday	Tuesday, April 2	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Teacher Workday	Wednesday, April 24	<b>Open</b> 7:30-5:30
Teacher Workday	Thurs-Fri May 23-24	<b>Closed</b>

## **General Information and Policies**

- The Connections program serves boys and girls ages 5 to 12, grades K through 5. Children who are currently 4 years old, but will enter kindergarten and have a birthday before September 30th may be enrolled in the summer program.
- It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to keep proper registration information and current phone numbers in their child's Connections Program permanent records. Services may be withheld if this information is not provided. Connections will have access and will use the information in the school cumulative records as needed.
- If you wish to contact the Connections Program, you can call the Program Coordinator at 540-558-3739. During program hours, please try more than once when staff do not answer. (Sometimes we cannot hear the phone). After hours, please leave a message, and the Program Coordinator will return your call as soon as possible. You may also email the Program Coordinator at [emilystrom@mcps.org](mailto:emilystrom@mcps.org). Emails are checked multiple times throughout the day. Because we want to remain focused on the children, emails may not be responded to until the end of the workday.
- Whenever possible, the parent/guardian should call the program at 540-558-3739 when he/she will be late for pick-up. Alternate arrangements should be considered. Continued late pick-up may result in suspension or termination of services. It is the Connections Program policy that when a child is not picked up by 6:10 p.m., a call shall be made to the parents and those authorized to pick up the child. If no one can be reached, the Program Coordinator will stay at the school until a parent or authorized person arrives. After 6:30 p.m. the proper authorities will be notified to ensure the child's safety. This will result in immediate termination from the Connections Program unless it was an unavoidable emergency.
- Children are not allowed to leave alone or without accompaniment of an authorized adult. The Connections Program staff will only release your child(ren) to individuals listed on the application form. If someone not listed in the child's permanent file is to pick up your child, you must contact the Connections Program Coordinator and provide a written note, authorizing this person by name. We will ask for proper identification and then release your child.
- Parents/Guardians are required to notify the Program Coordinator of any changes in the child's health history and immunizations that are received after enrollment.

## Health and Safety

- An “Accident/Incident Report” form is used for any serious injury, accident, or occurrence. The information is recorded, signed by staff and parent/guardian, and filed. Two copies will be made; one for the parent/guardian and one to be placed in the child’s file by the attending staff member.
- All staff will actively supervise children outside. All staff has been trained to cover the areas of outside play. A designated person will accompany all children when entering or exiting the school.
- Parents/Guardians who have children who require medication for serious medical conditions must complete an “Authorization to Give Medication” form if the child requires medication while at the program. All medications will be kept by the school nurse, but Connections will have access to these medications. Medicines must be in original containers. Please give specific instructions. If medication is to continue for more than 10 days, a letter from the physician is required along with the form. When needed, medication shall be refrigerated. Staff will keep records about the administration of medication and will inform parents of any adverse reaction to medication administered and any medication error. Medication shall be returned to the parents as soon as it is no longer needed.
- Students are **not permitted** to attend the Connections Program if they have:
  - fever
  - contagious illness
  - vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Students should be free of fever/vomiting/diarrhea (without medication) for 24 hours before they can return to Connections.
- Parents/Guardians are required to pick-up their child as soon as possible if he/she becomes ill while in the Connections Program.

## Food and Drink Policy

- Children will only be permitted to eat during designated times throughout the day. Children must remain seated at a table while eating. If your child has special circumstances that may require them to eat more frequently throughout the day, or has any dietary restrictions or food allergies, a parent/guardian must provide written documentation for any needed accommodations.
- Connections **does not** have the ability to refrigerate or microwave **any** food for your child. All snacks and lunches must be eaten “as is” straight from your child’s lunch box.
- All lunch boxes, water bottles, and food containers **must** be labeled clearly with your child’s first and last name.
- **Breakfast:** Your child may eat breakfast before they arrive, or they may bring a packed breakfast from home and eat it upon arrival in the morning. Breakfast may not be eaten outside or in the gym.

If your child arrives when we are outside of the classroom, we will ask that they wait until we return to the room to eat.

- **Afternoon snack:** You do not need to provide your child with an afternoon snack. The Connections program provides each child with 1 juice box or water bottle and 1 prepackaged snack. If your child has leftover food from their lunch, or if you would like to send your child with an extra snack, they will be permitted to eat them during this time as well. Afternoon snack is 15 minutes long.
- **Water Bottles and Drinks:** We recommend sending your child with a refillable water bottle. Children may pack juice or other drinks for snack or lunch, however all drinks must have a lid. Sodas and energy drinks are not allowed.
- When necessary, a special “PEANUT FREE” table will be provided for children with peanut and other food allergies.

## Student Conduct and Behavioral Policies

**Please review this section with your child prior to their first day at Connections.** Repeated violations of Connections rules may result in your child’s dismissal from the Connections program. All Connections rules and procedures have been put in place to ensure that Connections is a safe, fun, and welcoming environment for all kids to learn, explore, and grow. Children are always welcome to open a dialogue with staff about the rules if they feel they are unfair or could be improved. We try our best to follow up with children when rules are broken to discuss how we can do things differently in the future. We recognize that every child is unique and are more than willing to work with any individual who needs an accommodation for specific rules. If you feel your child may require any special behavioral accommodations, please contact the Program Coordinator to set up a meeting.

**Connections Classroom Behavior Policy:** Any child who is breaking a rule will receive 2 verbal warnings to correct the behavior. It will always be made clear when warnings are given. If the behavior continues after the second warning, the child will receive a consequence.

- Consequences include: sitting out, apologizing, writing a letter home to parents or administration, losing privileges (for example: chromebook time, ability to play with certain items, etc.), or having a 1 on 1 sit down meeting with the Program Coordinator. Consequences will vary based on the severity of the infraction.
- The 2 warning policy applies to every situation, except for when there is a risk of harm (the 3 nonnegotiable rules).

**3 Nonnegotiable Rules in Connections:** These are rules that are in place to protect the safety of the children and staff. There are no warnings or second chances for any child who breaks these rules. If one of

these rules is broken, it automatically results in a classroom consequence as well as informing the parents, principals, or both, of the situation. Depending on the severity of the situation, violation of any of these rules may result in the termination of the child's enrollment in the Connections program.

- 1. No child may leave the classroom, gym, or designated area without notifying an adult.**
  - a. If there is a situation where a child needs to leave (to go back to their classroom, visit the nurse, use the restroom, go to the calm room, etc.), the child must first ask permission from an adult who will escort them in the hallways.
- 2. No child may hit, punch, scratch, kick, or lay their hands on another child or adult with the intent to cause harm to that individual.**
  - a. This includes any acts of aggression towards classroom items that could potentially cause harm to people in the surrounding area. (For example, kicking shelves that could fall onto others, throwing objects, etc.)
  - b. If a child is feeling angry, sad, or overwhelmed and needs a way to express those feelings, they need to seek out an adult before the situation escalates to find a solution.
- 3. No child may use threatening, violent, or demeaning language when speaking about others or themselves.**

**Other Connections Classroom Rules:** This is not an all inclusive list as there are rules for every station, activity, and situation in Connections. We have regular meetings with the kids to go over old rules, and create new ones. All the children know the rules and are very good about reminding each other and helping new children learn. These are a few general guidelines that we follow for every student.

1. No chromebooks are to be used except during designated "chromebook time". No other technology is permitted in the Connections program.
  - a. If a child wants to use their chromebook outside of this time, they must have permission from an adult to do a specific activity.
  - b. Tablets, gaming consoles, and all other forms of technology are not allowed without permission from the Program Coordinator.. If a child brings any of these devices, they will be confiscated and kept safe until they can be returned to the child's parent/guardian.
  - c. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during the Connections program. If you feel your child needs to have their phone, it must remain on silent mode and inside their bookbag.
2. All toys, stations, and classroom supplies must be shared with others.
3. All kids must work together during clean up time. No child is "done" until the entire classroom is cleaned.
  - a. During clean up time, children must first clean up whatever they were playing with. Once they have done that, if the room is not yet clean, they must find something else to help with. This includes helping a friend clean up their mess, stacking chairs, picking up trash, etc.
4. When an adult, child, or guest, is speaking or presenting, all children must be respectful.

- a. This means no talking, playing with toys, or causing disruptions to others.
5. No child may call home during Connections.
  - a. The only time Connections calls home is when the child is sick.
  - b. The Connections program does not call home for homesickness or if the child is not having fun. We recognize that a lot of the time, children are in Connections because their parents have to work. We understand the importance of not interrupting the parents during this time and we are committed to working with the child to find alternative solutions for these issues.
  - c. When rules are broken and parents need to be contacted, we will do so during pick up time, or by email or phone call outside of Connections hours.
6. No child may give **anything** to another child during the Connections Program.
  - a. This includes sharing food, toys, clothing, or anything else that comes from home. If there is a concern about a child's wellbeing (not having enough food, clothing, etc.) please contact the Program Coordinator and we will work with you to address the issue.
7. Children may bring toys and supplies from home **at their own risk**.
  - a. The Connections program is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged items. We encourage children to leave their personal items at home, however they may bring them if they choose, as long as they do not cause disruptions.
  - b. If any item brought from home is causing interruptions during the program it will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the day.
  - c. Children may bring Pokemon cards to look at, but trading is **prohibited**. Any child caught trading cards will not be permitted to bring them for the remainder of the summer program.

**Playground Policies:** Children are allowed to play in designated areas of the playground within supervision of staff.

- Toys, balls, etc. are used on the grass or hard surface, not on equipment for safety.
- Children may not climb on the tops or outside of playground equipment. Children are not permitted to climb any trees, fences, or buildings.
- Children may not climb up the slides. They must slide down feet first, one at a time.
- Children must remain seated and holding on when on the swings, seesaw, and spinner. They must remain seated until they come to a complete stop. Children will be instructed to not walk close to any of these pieces of playground equipment to avoid the danger of being hit or knocked down.
- Children may not do any forward or backward flips on the playground. This includes on the ground, swings, monkey bars, and all other playground equipment.

**ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT**

When signing BELOW, this will CONFIRM that you have read the Parent Handbook and understand, agree with, and agree to abide by its contents and each of the following statements.

I am enrolling my child, \_\_\_\_\_, in the Prices Fork Elementary School Connections Program.

I give my permission and authorization for the staff to get emergency medical care for my child in the event I cannot be reached. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I/we will be responsible for the payment of medical expenses. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

If the staff notifies me that my child is ill, I will pick him/her up as soon as possible or arrange for another person to do so. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I give permission for my child to take part in all authorized field trips or neighborhood walks. I agree to pay the fees that pertain to any field trips that I have been given advance notice about. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I grant permission for my child to participate in the activities and in the use of equipment at Prices Fork Elementary School's Connections Program. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I grant permission for my child to be included in Prices Fork Elementary School's Connections Program pictures and for these to be used for publicity purposes. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I have read and understand the Connections Student Conduct and Behavior Policies. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I understand that the health history form must be completed and turned into the Program Director for my child to be fully enrolled. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I understand that if payment is not made to Prices Fork Elementary at the specified time, my child may be dismissed from the program. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

I understand if my child is admitted to the program, appropriate social behavior is required for students to continue in the program. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

For further understanding between the Prices Fork Elementary School Connections Program and the parents/legal guardian, I acknowledge that I have read the parent handbook. I also understand my responsibilities and will comply with its policies and procedures while my child attends the Prices Fork Elementary School Connections Program

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/legal guardian 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/legal guardian 2)

### PFES Connections Program 2023-24 Registration Form

Please complete this form to hold a space in the Connections Program at Price's Fork for **the 2023-24 School Year**. You will need to pay a one-time registration fee of \$30 per child; \$50 for two children; and \$10 for each additional child to reserve a slot. If you have been previously enrolled in the Connections Program (summer or school year care), you do not need to re-pay the registration fee.

Today's Date	Date of Enrollment	Date of Withdrawal	
Child's Last Name	Child's First Name	Date of Birth	Sex (Circle one) M or F
Child's Home Address		Connections Use (circle choice)	
		Full Time (AM and PM)	Occasional Use (Flex Hours)
City	State/Zip Code	AM Care ONLY	PM Care ONLY

Child's Grade for 2023-24 School Year	Child's Classroom Teacher for 2023-24 School Year
Child's Likes	
Child's Dislikes	
Favorite Snack	Favorite Activity
Please list any allergies or intolerance to Food, Medication, Bees, etc.	
Please list any foods your child may not or cannot eat	

Parent/Guardian 1 Name	Email
Cell Phone	Work Phone
Parent/Guardian 2 Name	Email
Cell Phone	Work Phone
Brief Description of Child's Living Situation (Who lives in the home, siblings, custody arrangement, etc.)	

Anything else we should know about your child? Please use the back of this page to fill us in!

## Emergency Contact and Authorized Pick Up:

In the event of an emergency and you cannot be reached, please list at least 2 emergency contact persons who are authorized to act on behalf of your child.

1.Name	Relationship to Child	
Address	Cell Phone	Work Phone
2. Name	Relationship to Child	
Address	Cell Phone	Work Phone

The following information will allow the Connections Program to release your child to these individuals only. If someone not listed is to pick up your child, YOU MUST SEND A NOTE OR PHONE the Connections Program Coordinator with a name and description of the person. We will ask for proper identification before we release your child.

I agree that the following people may pick up my child/ren. Please notify these people that you have put them on the application. The Connections staff may release my child/ren to the following people:

Please list any and all persons authorized to pick up your child/ren. Complete addresses are required.

1. Name	Address	Phone
2. Name	Address	Phone
3. Name	Address	Phone
4. Name	Address	Phone
Person(s) NOT Authorized to pick up my child/ren*		

\* Appropriate paperwork such as custody papers shall be attached if a parent is not allowed to pick up the child.

# CHILD'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

(To be used in the event of a medical emergency)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 1 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian 2 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Primary/Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

As Parent or Guardian, I authorize Connections Program Coordinator to obtain immediate medical care and consent to the hospitalization of, the performance of necessary diagnostic tests upon, the use of surgery on, and/or the administration of drugs to, my child or ward if an emergency occurs when I cannot be located immediately. It is also understood that this agreement covers only those situations which are true emergencies and only when I cannot be reached. Otherwise, I expect to be notified immediately.

1. I will be responsible for payment of medical care expenses.

2. Medical treatment costs are covered by:

a. Insurance Carrier \_\_\_\_\_

Policyholder \_\_\_\_\_

Group No. \_\_\_\_\_ ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

b. Medicaid Coverage No. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Other Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

d. No Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Preferred Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Preferred Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

My child is enrolled in the Prices Fork Elementary School Connections Program and I agree to authorize the staff to seek emergency treatment in the event that I cannot be reached.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature