

PFES Connections Program

2024-25 School Year Parent Handbook

Program Coordinator: Emily Strom
Connections Phone: 540-558-3739
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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.

*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*

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*****Pages 1-7 should be kept for your records. Please fill out pages 8-11 completely, then detach and return.*****

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Parents/Guardians are required to read the parent handbook in its entirety before filling out and returning all registration forms **along with the supply fee**. 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 supply 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.

Hours of Operation, Daily Schedule, & 24-25 Calendar

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:

Morning Session		Afternoon Session	
7:00-8:00	Freetime in Classrooms	3:45-4:00	Snack/Homework Time
8:00-8:30	Kids Choice: Gym or Freetime	4:00-4:15	Group Game (Grades 3-5) or Storytime (Grades K-2)
8:30-8:45	Group Game (Grades 3-5) or Storytime (Grades K-2)	4:15-4:45	Freetime in Classrooms
		4:45-5:30	Gym/Playground Time
		5:30-6:00	Technology Time

2024-25 Calendar:

Fall 2024	Date	Connections will be...	Spring 2025	Date	Connections will be...
Teacher Workday	Monday, August 12	Closed	Teacher Workday	Thurs-Fri January 2-3	Open 7:30-5:30
Holiday	Monday, September 2	Closed	Holiday	Monday, January 20	Closed
Teacher Workday	Thursday, October 17	Open 7:30-5:30	Holiday	Monday, February 17	Closed
Fall Break	Friday, October 18	Closed	Spring Break	Mon-Fri March 10-14	Closed
Teacher Workday	Tuesday, November 5	Open 7:30-5:30	Teacher Workday	Wednesday March 26	Open 7:30-5:30
Thanksgiving Break	Wed-Fri November 27-29	Closed	Holiday	Monday, May 26	Closed
Winter Break	Mon-Wed Dec. 23-Jan. 1	Closed			

Program Costs & Payment Information

There is a 10% sibling discount that applies to the second child (or \$5 off the TWD rate). The supply fee will be used to purchase materials and supplies for the school year (ex. beads, classroom supplies, crafts, party supplies, etc.)

Program Costs		1 child	2 children
Registration Fee	1 time fee for children who have never attended the Connections program before (if you have paid in previous years, you do not need to pay this fee again)	\$30	\$50
School Year Supply Fee	For ALL children who attend Connections during our school year program	\$20 Per Family	
Weekly AM & PM Care	Child attends during our AM & PM sessions	\$75	\$142.50
Weekly AM Care ONLY	Child attends during our AM session only	\$45	\$85.50
Weekly PM Care ONLY	Child attends during our after school session only	\$55	\$104.50
Hourly Flex Card (for Occasional Use)	For occasional Connections use. May be used in conjunction with AM or PM weekly rate (for example, if your child needs daily AM care but only needs PM care 1 day a week)	\$155 (for 20 hours)	
Teacher Work Day Care	Full Day Care on TWD's between the hours of 7:30-5:30	\$40	\$75

Payments:

- Payment for that day (or week) is due when your child is dropped off.
- **If your account is more than 2 months overdue, your child's enrollment in Connections will be suspended and they will be unable to attend our program until the account balance is paid in full.**
- You may pay in **cash**, by **check** (made out to PFES), or by **credit card** on myschoolbucks.com.
- Payments can be dropped off in the front office, the Connections room during drop off/pick up, or given to your child's classroom teacher.

Prices on myschoolbucks.com now include a 4.75% service fee to cover the rising cost of credit card acceptance. If you pay by cash or check, you won't pay this surcharge.

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 are enrolled in kindergarten and have a birthday before September 30th may be enrolled in the program.

Class Placement: Our classrooms, Cub Corner and Puma Place will be split up based on grade level and age depending on enrollment numbers. In the past, Cub Corner has been K-1 and Puma Place has been grades 2-5.

Updating Registration Info: It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to keep proper registration information and phone numbers in their child's Connections Program permanent records. You may update your child's registration information through email or written notice. 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. 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.

Contacting Connections: If you wish to contact the Connections Program, you can do so through phone (540-558-3739) or by email. 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. Emails are checked multiple times throughout the day.

Late Pickup: 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.

Authorized Pickup: 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.

Calls Home during Connections: No child may call home during Connections. Staff members will call parents during the program only if a child is injured, ill, or needs to be picked up. The Connections Program does not call home due to homesickness or if the child is not "having fun". We understand the importance of not interrupting parents during work hours and are committed to working with any child who is struggling with these issues to find alternative solutions.

Personal Items from Home: Children may bring toys & supplies (blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, art supplies & games) from home **at their own risk**. 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. Any item brought from home that is causing disruptions during the program will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian during pickup.

- No child may “give” **anything** to another child during the Connections Program. This includes 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 director and we will work with the families to help address the issue.
- Children may bring pokemon cards to Connections to look at, but trading is **prohibited**. Any child caught trading cards will not be permitted to bring them for the remainder of the school year.

Health and Safety:

- **Accident/Incident Reports:** 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.
- **Safety Policy:** 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.
- **Medication Policy:** 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.
- **Illness:** 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 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. When necessary, a special “PEANUT FREE” table will be provided for children with peanut and other food allergies.

- 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.

Behavior Policy & Student Conduct Agreement

Please review this section with your child prior to their first day of 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.

- The 2 warning policy applies to every situation, except for when there is a risk of harm to any person or property. Any time there is the threat of violence, whether acted upon or not, there will automatically be a classroom consequence in addition to informing the parents/guardians and/or the principal of the situation.
- 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.
- Depending on the frequency and severity of the infraction, violation of any of the Connections Conduct Agreement rules may result in the termination of the child's enrollment in the Connections program.

Connections Conduct Agreement:

1. We Stick Together!
 - a. We ALWAYS tell an adult before leaving the classroom/gym/playground.
 - b. We keep our faces & bodies visible to the adults AT ALL TIMES.
 - c. We NEVER hide from the adults or our parents.
2. We are Kind & Respectful!
 - a. We LISTEN QUIETLY & always acknowledge when we are spoken to.
 - b. We always ask BEFORE touching things that belong to others.
 - c. We NEVER use threatening or violent language.
3. We Honor Personal Space & Keep our Hands to Ourselves!
 - a. We NEVER hit, kick, punch, or harm ANY child, adult, or school property.
 - b. We ask BEFORE hugging, touching, or getting in anyone's personal space.
 - c. We do not pick up, hold down, or restrain anyone for ANY reason.
4. We include EVERYONE!
 - a. We ALWAYS allow others to join in on our games and play with us.
 - b. We share ALL toys, games, and equipment.
 - c. We ask to be "next in line" instead of grabbing when someone has something we want.
5. We clean up as a group!
 - a. First, we clean up our mess.
 - b. Second, we find a friend and help them clean up.
 - c. Third, we look for any loose pieces or trash & stack chairs.
 - d. Finally, we check in with the adult to see what else we can do.

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

When signing BELOW, this will CONFIRM that you have read the 2024-25 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 understand that payment for care is due in full at the beginning of each week. I acknowledge that if my account is more than 2 months overdue, my child's enrollment in the Connections program will be suspended until the overdue balance is paid in full. _____ (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 all 4 enrollment forms must be completed and turned into the Program Director for my child to be fully enrolled. _____ (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 2024-25 Registration Form

Please complete this form to hold a space in the Connections Program for **the 2024-25 School Year**. You will need to pay a one-time registration fee if you have never attended Connections before. 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. All families must pay the School Year Supply fee to reserve their spot.

Today's Date	Date of Enrollment	Date of Birth	
Child's Last Name	Child's First Name	Sex (Circle One) M or F	Connections Use (circle all that apply below)
Child's Home Address		Occasional Use (Flex Hours)	
		Full Time (AM and PM Care)	Teacher Workday Care
City	State/Zip Code	AM Care ONLY	PM Care ONLY

Child's Grade for 2024-25 School Year	Child's Classroom Teacher for 2024-25 School Year
Child's Likes	
Child's Dislikes	
Favorite Snacks	Favorite Activities
Please list any allergies, intolerances to Food, Medication, Bees, etc., or pertinent medical information	
Please list any dietary restrictions your child has (example: red dye sensitivity, no gum, etc.)	

Parent/Guardian 1 Name		Email
Cell Phone	Work Phone	Employer/Typical Work Hours
Parent/Guardian 2 Name		Email
Cell Phone	Work Phone	Employer/Typical Work Hours
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 **other than yourself** 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

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

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

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