

Back to School Plan

August 5, 2020

Dear Prairie Hill Families,

Thank you for your patience, as we have worked to create our plan for the 2020-2021 school year. I want to acknowledge the faculty, staff and board members for their commitment to work during the entire summer to create a plan that would allow the students to return to our beloved school in September. Our goal is, and has always been, to have your students on campus by following the Stay Safe to Stay Open Plan. This document is being used to answer many of the questions we are receiving through email and other communications.

We are unable to move the deadline for full tuition reimbursement, as time is needed by the faculty to set up classrooms, buy supplies and create spaces for learning. Hiring teaching staff and other employees has been put on hold until the August 7 deadline, and current employees have been waiting to know if they are still employed. Thank you for your understanding.

The newest mandate from the governor's office **requires that masks be worn indoors** (but not when eating or napping) when not in a private residence. Masks will be required for all students enrolled in Kindergarten thru Grade 6. We understand that the mandate is for students age 5 and up, but we feel it will be difficult to ask only the students in the kindergarten that are over age 5 to wear a mask while the younger children do not. Wonder Garden students will be encouraged but not required to wear a mask. Prairie Hill Waldorf School strongly recommends that students wear masks outside when social distancing is not possible. The class teacher will have the flexibility and the option to require masks outside during certain activities.

This may be difficult for some students, and we will spend time encouraging them and practicing with them. Please contact your teacher if your child has a health problem that may interfere with mask use. During the Summer Garden Camp, we have found that children are open and willing to wearing masks for the times they are inside. Students will not be disciplined for not wearing a mask, rather the faculty will make it as easy as possible. Stories, gentle words and lots of positive interactions will help ease students into the new mask accessory.

We are doing everything we can to mitigate the risk of infection; from creating outdoor spaces for each class, updating our HVAC system, adding new cleaning protocol and providing PPE for our students and faculty. We are doing what we can, but it is impossible to guarantee that COVID will not reach someone in the school. If a student or staff member tests positive, we will follow the Waukesha Health Dept. policies <https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/HealthAndHumanServices/PublicHealth/public-health-preparedness/COVID19/safeschools/>. It states: if a student/faculty member tests positive for Covid-19, those who were deemed to be in close contact (under the health department guidelines) must quarantine for 14 days. Make up lessons and homework will be available for pick up and/or delivery with personal check-ins by the class teacher.

We do not take your support of Prairie Hill for granted, and we thank you for your dedication and commitment during this pandemic. All of us at the school acknowledge how hard parents work to support the school financially, by volunteering and supporting their teachers. Tuition dollars make up a large part of our operating budget, about 75%. We are always open for conversation with families that may be having financial difficulty.

Prairie Hill's Early Childhood Classrooms are currently full with waiting lists. We recognize that some of our current families may not be ready to send their young children back to in-person school, but still wish to have a way to hold their child's space for a potential return in the spring or next fall. For this reason, we will be offering a discounted virtual learning program from the start of the 2020-2021 school year for **Kindergarten students only**. The program will be for 5 half days and will cost **\$5,522 for the year**. It will consist of a dedicated teacher creating audio lessons and circles along with projects for your student. Once the student is enrolled in the on-line program, they may only make a change to on-campus at the end of the first semester in December. **A minimum number of students is required in order to offer this program.** Due to budget and faculty time constraints, we are unable to offer a similar program for grades 1-6 at this time.

If at any time the entire school moves to virtual learning, all on campus **EC families** will receive tuition compensation for each week of virtual school. Tuition will be prorated by the week, and you will receive 50% of each virtual week's tuition back as a credit for the 2021-2022 school year. Students enrolled in the virtual Kindergarten from the start of the year will continue with that program (this is an increase credit form the previous plan). **There is no tuition reduction for the grades in the event of virtual learning.** Grades teacher will devote time and energy to support students in a rigorous Waldorf education.

There are certain circumstances that may require Prairie Hill to make the switch to all virtual learning. These circumstances include a state or health department mandate, as well as the school's own determination that virtual learning is necessary. This determination could occur if the school determines the current risk of exposure precludes the school from being able to function. This may include high positive cases in the school, a classroom or the faculty, among others. If this situation occurs, the following plans will be put into place:

Grades Student Virtual Plan:

This plan is fluid and subject to change based on the developmental and individual needs of the students, families and staff.

During times of virtual learning, our students need the emotional and academic support of their teachers. Our faculty is dedicated to the individual relationships they have developed with your children, and they will continue to support and encourage them during times when in-person learning isn't possible.

Prairie Hill's distance learning curriculum will be a project-based curriculum, giving students the ability to dive deeply into a subject with more freedom over their weekly schedule. Things that you can expect during this period of distance learning:

- Teachers will provide a weekly lesson plan on Sunday evenings by 8 pm. All assignments for the week will be given at this time.
- All teachers will use the same template for creating their weekly lesson plans, these lesson plans will include mathematics, language arts (literature, poetry and verse), science/gardening, social studies, music, movement/ games, handwork, and Spanish, as well as social emotional development.
- All weekly lesson plans will center around the same theme and will be project based.
- Screen time will be limited to Zoom meetings. Each class will have at least 1 all class Zoom meeting per week (amount of all class Zoom meetings will be determined by grade level). Each child will have 1 individual Zoom meeting with their teacher each week.
- Progress on projects will be shown on Friday during full class Zoom meetings.
- Skills work will be covered during your child's weekly one on one meeting with their teacher.
- Friday Zoom meetings will be spaced out so that no siblings' zoom time will overlap.
- Google Classroom will be used to disseminate information only. Students will not be expected to upload assignments to Google Classroom.
- Teachers will monitor students' progress during all class zoom meetings, one on one Zoom meetings and bin drop off (when a teacher requests work to be returned).
- Care plans with Learning Support will continue.
- All teachers will have Zoom office hours – 2 – 1 hour periods per week.
- Our Subject teachers will assign one activity per week per class, most often on the topic that the class teacher is bringing that week. Subject and class teachers will coordinate with each other.

Parent Expectations:

- Attend a virtual parent evening before school begins to learn about expectations and curriculum for in school and distance learning.
- Families should feel free to find creative ways to support each other, allowing parents to work and students to be socially engaged with peers from their class.
- Parents are expected to oversee their child's work.
- Facilitate and support your child's attendance at all teacher and class meetings.

Outline of what to expect by grade for distance learning in 2020-21:

Grades 1- 3

- Project to be worked on - based on a block
- 1 Zoom meeting on Friday for 45 minutes - to share progress
- 1 1:1 conversation /week with each child
- Pre-recorded audio only (no video): read aloud time, music, poetry, verses
 - 10 min. read aloud 4x/week
 - Curricular story /week

Grades 4-5

- Project to be worked on - based on a block
- 1 Zoom meeting on Friday for 45 minutes - to share progress
- 1 1:1 conversation /week with each child
- Pre-recorded audio only (no video)

- 10-20 min. read aloud 2x/week
- In order to get more peer to peer interaction, up to 2 small-group work break out Zoom meetings - literacy groups.
- There will be an amount of student work time (including everything: listening, reading, zoom meeting, 1:1 time) expected per day (your teacher will send you a detailed schedule)

Grade 6

- Project to be worked on - based on a block
- 1 Zoom meeting on Friday for 45 minutes - to share progress
- 1 1:1 conversation /week with each child
- Pre-recorded audio only (no video)
 - 10-20 min. read aloud 2x/week
- There will be an amount of student work time (including everything: listening, reading, zoom meeting, 1:1 time) expected per day (your teacher will send you a detailed schedule)
- In order to get more Peer to peer interaction, up to 2 small-group work break out zoom meetings - literacy groups, etc.
- The needs of middle school students are different than those of younger grades, therefore the teacher will have the option to offer extra support to students

Early Childhood Student Virtual Plan:

This plan is fluid and subject to change for the developmental and individual needs of the students, families and staff.

Here is what you can expect from the EC Dept:

Curriculum:

- **Every Sunday** evening, you will receive [one all-inclusive post](#) from your child's teacher that lays out the weekly rhythm.
 - Each weekly rhythm will include:
 - Morning Circle
 - Stories
 - Class Projects
 - Transition Songs and Games
 - School Recipes
 - Developmental and Therapeutic Movement
 - Online Resources for Parents
- **Every Monday** morning, there will be an optional Zoom Meeting for each class. These weekly opportunities will include:
 - Movement
 - A social activity
 - Provide an opportunity for students to show progress on class projects
 - Teachers will also be monitoring student progress during:
 - optional one-on-one Zoom calls with students

- curriculum supply drop offs for projects to be returned when requested for closer observation

Materials and Supplies:

- There will be an assigned Curriculum Bin Pick-up day. These bins will have all the materials you and your child(ren) need to facilitate the weekly lessons.
- Supply pickups will be scheduled as needed.
 - If you run out of a particular material prior to this, please contact your lead teacher to arrange a time to restock.

Parent Expectations:

- Attend a parent evening before the beginning of school to learn about expectations and curriculum for in-person and distance learning.
- We suggest that families network together within their cohort (class) in order to allow parents to work and students to be together with other students.
- Parents are expected to oversee their child's work.
- Facilitate your child's attendance to all one-on-one meetings with their teacher and class meetings.
- Have the option of attending bimonthly Parent Evenings.

Whole Child/Family Wellness:

We recognize the distance learning that occurred in the spring limited each child's ability to socially interact with their peers. This lack of social interaction posed a challenge for children and parents alike. With this knowledge in mind, we have developed ways to help children connect with the school and integrate with other students.

In the Early Childhood these supports include:

- Photo books of the school classrooms and grounds for all students to receive before the beginning of the school year.
- A virtual Open House will be held in each Early Childhood class to build community
- A Book of Faces will be provided for each family with pictures of the Early Childhood staff along with a short bio and their role in the program.
- The social and emotional health of families and children will be supported through regular contact with teachers and a curriculum designed for multiple learning styles with sensory experiences.
 - As needed, you will have an opportunity to connect with your child's teacher each week to discuss questions or concerns.
 - Twice a month, teachers will hold Parent evenings on Zoom to further support parent education and connection among our EC community.
- Teachers will reach out to families directly with children who have specific learning needs.
- Our Learning Support Specialist, Ms. Amy Schroeder, will continue to support the Early Childhood department by:
 - Providing developmental and therapeutic movements for all students

- Assist in supporting students and families in need by working collaboratively with teachers and parents.

In the Grades these supports include:

- To help make this process as fluid and easy for the children as possible, teachers will have a “what’s to be expected call” with their class.
- In addition, we will focus on Social and Emotional Health during the first week of school to ease the children back into the school environment and peer to peer connections. There will be activities to set the year off on a positive note and to reconnect with their peers and teacher. To continue throughout the year, we will have restorative/class meetings each week.
- Our Learning Support Specialist, Ms. Amy Schroeder, will continue to support the Grades department by:
 - providing developmental and therapeutic movements for all students
 - Assist in supporting students and families in need by working collaboratively with teachers and parents.

This plan has been vetted by the faculty, board of trustees and the administration, working together in the spirit of collaboration and with the understanding that the students are always in the center of our decisions. We thank you for supporting the school and helping us stay open so that we can serve you.

Thank you,

Jeanne Ring
Administrator

A Verse for Our Time

We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards us out of the future.
We must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future.
We must look forward with absolute equanimity
To everything that may come.
And we must think only that whatever comes
Is given to us is by a world-directive full of wisdom.
It is part of what we must learn in this age,
Namely, to live out of pure trust,
Without any security in existence.
Trust in the ever present help
Of the spiritual world.
Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.
And let us seek the awakening within ourselves
Every morning and every evening.
-Rudolf Steiner