



2023-24 Family Handbook

Pacific Crest Community School

116 NE 29th Ave

Portland, OR 97232

503-234-2826

www.pcrest.org

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GENERAL INFORMATION

General Information

Welcome!

Pacific Crest Community School was created in January of 1993 by five teachers who believed that creativity, individuality, responsibility and achievement should be celebrated in school. Pacific Crest's educational philosophy, curriculum and staffing choices all reflect these priorities. The most important components of our school are the students and their families. By choosing to become a part of Pacific Crest you join ranks with a group of enthusiastic teachers, devoted families and committed community members. Welcome! We hope that this handbook assists in your transition into our school and encourages your ongoing involvement with our community.

Organization

Pacific Crest Community School is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization and, as such, is governed by a volunteer board of directors. The board meets bi-monthly to discuss new business. Comments or suggestions are welcomed and may be e-mailed to the Director at any time to be brought to board meetings.

Accreditation

Pacific Crest Community School is accredited by Cognia (Formerly AdvancEd). Credits earned at institutions accredited by Cognia are recognized by all other public and private accredited schools.

Hours

The school building is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8:00-3:30 on Fridays, with classes operating between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Just because classes are in session from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. does not mean that students have classes every hour. Students' actual schedules are determined at the beginning of each semester with the assistance of their advisor and their parents.

School Closures

Holidays

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Veteran's Day | November 10 |
| • Thanksgiving | November 23-24 |
| • Winter Break | December 18-January 1 |
| • Martin Luther King Jr. Day | January 15 |
| • Presidents' Day | February 19 |
| • Spring Vacation | March 18-29 |
| • Memorial Day | May 27 |

Teacher Work Days

Teacher work days occur at the end of each quarter in order to give teachers an opportunity to work on the quarterly evaluations and prepare for the upcoming quarter. On these days the school will be closed. The teacher work days for the 2023-24 school year are: October 13th, November 3rd, January 26th and 30th, and April 12th.

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences

Student/Advisor/Parent Conferences take place at the end of the first semester. The date for 2023-24 is January 30th. On this day there are no classes.

Staff

Pacific Crest Teaching Staff for 2023-24

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Jordia Blumenstein | MS Coordinator & Service Learning |
| • Lizzy Cleland | Math & Japanese |
| • Teeny Conway | Art |
| • Julie Dieringer | Administrative Assistant |
| • Owen Heh | Science |
| • Jack Marvin | School Counselor |
| • Essence McClain | Social Studies |
| • Kurt Maier | Social Studies |
| • Jenny Osborne | Director |
| • Emily Phillips | Math |
| • Tigerin Peare | Science |
| • David Raish | Spanish & PE |
| • Jason Rouse | Drama |
| • Jeff Struck | Language Arts |
| • Daren Todd | Art |

Attendance

Pacific Crest Students are expected to attend school for 5.5 hours per day, averaged over the course of the week to be a minimum of 27.5 hours.

Open Campus Policy

Pacific Crest Community School has an open campus. Understanding the realities of living and working in an urban setting, some parents may not be comfortable with this. It is the responsibility of each parent to decide whether their child is ready to handle off-campus privileges. If you do not want your child to leave the campus during the day or give them permission to leave only for lunch, with others, on a teacher supervised trip, etc., please explain this to your child. **The school can neither monitor nor enforce this agreement.** As with everything at PCCS, this agreement is based on communication and trust. Please make your expectations clear to your child. Although the school cannot be responsible for any agreement you reach, please inform your student's advisor of any modifications to the open campus policy.

Parking

In order to minimize the impact we have on our residential neighbors, we ask that you please park in the school parking lot or on the portions of 29th Avenue and Davis Street that are adjacent to the school. Our neighbors across 29th Avenue do not have driveways so we ask that you avoid parking in front of their homes during events or visits to the school.

Transportation

Pacific Crest is served by Tri-Met buses 19 and 20. A monthly Student Pass can be purchased at all Tri-Met outlets.

Signing In/Signing Out

There are daily attendance sheets on the bulletin board near the main entry. For safety and attendance tracking, **all students are expected to sign in and out during the day.** This includes daily arrival and departure, as well as any off-campus activities. The sign in sheets allow us to track student attendance. It is each student's responsibility to tally the hours each day. Days not tallied are not counted toward attendance. **If a student is ill, will arrive late or is unable to attend school for other reasons, please notify the school by 8:30 am.**

Visitor Policy

The school receives many visitors each year. In order to lessen the disruption we have established the following policy:

- All visitors must contact the school at least 24 hours in advance.
- Visitors must have a specific reason to be in the building, e.g. information for enrollment, interest in educational philosophy, etc. The school will not approve visitors simply because they want to spend a day with friends.
- Visitors who have not contacted the office 24 hours prior to their visit will be asked to reschedule and return another time.
- All visitors must check in with the office upon arrival and check out when leaving.
- **Parents are encouraged to visit any time. Advance notice is not necessary.**

Communicating with Students During the Day

Cell phone use during the school day not permitted. If you need to reach your student for any reason, please call the office. All emergency calls should come through the office.

Communicating with Staff

Messages for staff may be left with the main office. Staff may also be reached via email; see the roster for addresses. Please communicate with your student's advisor to determine their preferred method of communication.

Lunch

Pacific Crest does not have a lunch program. Some students go off campus for lunch while others bring a sack lunch. The school has a refrigerator and a microwave available to students in the community room. The kitchen is not available for student use. It is recommended for students to bring in their own plates, mugs/cups and utensils.

Personal Items at School

Cubbies are available to students in the community room. These cubbies are unlocked. Valuables should be left at home. Pacific Crest Community School does not accept any liability for lost or stolen items.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone usage is not permitted during the school day at Pacific Crest. We use a tool called Yondr to make Pacific Crest Community School a phone-free space. Our goal is to encourage our community to engage in what they're doing and who they're doing it with - in physical space and in real time!

How it works:

- Students with cell phones will be provided with a Yondr pouch which they will keep with them at all times.
 - Phones will be “yondered” between the hours of 8:30 and 2:30. Classroom teachers for 8:30 and 9:30 classes will be responsible for the yondr process at the beginning of the day.
 - If a student arrives late for a class or comes early before their 9:30 class, they must come to the office to yondr their phone before entering class.
 - Phones may be unlocked at 2:30, either by the classroom teacher or in the office.
 - Students leaving before 2:30 may have their phones unlocked but the understanding is that they are leaving campus.
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Bad Weather Policy

Pacific Crest Community School will be cancelled, open late, or close early according to the Portland Public Schools closures. Check your local news websites for the most current school closure information. In the event that Portland Public Schools announces a two-hour delay, all classes will meet. School will open at 9:30 and hour-long classes will be shortened to 45 minutes, starting at 10:00. If you have any questions, please call the school.

Yearbook

The yearbook is a summation of the important events and programs as seen through the eyes of the students. Students are encouraged to keep photos, art, and short writings that they may wish to include in the publication at the end of the year. The yearbook usually costs around \$20 to purchase.

Tuition

Tuition for the 2023-24 school year is \$15,750. Pacific Crest partners with FACTS Tuition Management System to help manage our tuition payment program. Over the summer, families will receive an invitation to register with FACTS and set up payment preferences.

Donations to School

Pacific Crest Community School is a private, non-profit educational institution. Donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. There are two distinct fundraisers which are integral to the ongoing success of the school. The first is the Annual Fund, which is designated for scholarship support and professional development. The second is the PCCS Auction which raises funds for capital improvements. The annual fund drive takes place in the fall via a letter asking for your support and the auction usually takes place in the spring.

Expenses During the Year

Tuition covers the basic cost of educating your child. We often offer other activities that require additional expenses. It is difficult to predict the exact amount of these expenses, however we have listed some of the activities from last year and their approximate fees:

- Camp Tapawingo \$100
- Outdoor School \$450
- Overnight Trips \$50-\$100
- Rock Climbing Team \$200

This is by no means an all-encompassing list. When activities come up during the year that we feel are of educational value we will try to make them available to students.

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy

Pacific Crest Community School Mission

The mission of Pacific Crest Community School is to provide an exceptional education that respects individual student needs, fosters a passion for lifelong learning, and cultivates personal and social responsibility.

Pacific Crest Community School Educational Philosophy

The cornerstone of our educational philosophy is to provide students with an opportunity to take responsibility for their own education and for their community. Everyone learns differently and has different interests. What works for one student isn't necessarily right for another. We want to help each person discover his or her own best ways of learning.

Students are encouraged and required to be actively involved in their education. This involvement begins with the admissions process and continues until graduation. Each student, together with his or her advisor and parents, is an active participant in creating an academic plan and individualized schedule that reflects his or her goals, current academic standing in each subject area, and interests. Students meet regularly with their advisors and parents to ensure that they are on the right track.

In order to take full advantage of the school's diverse offerings and maintain "Good Standing" status, students take a minimum of 7 courses each term, though most students participate in more, and complete a minimum number of hours of community service each quarter.

The student portfolio is another vital aspect of our philosophy. Samples of work and reflections on their learning process, which students compile in their portfolio, allow them to demonstrate their best academic, artistic, and extra-curricular pursuits. Pacific Crest uses portfolio assessment and proficiency-based evaluations in lieu of letter grades to measure each student's progress.

We also help students to take responsibility for their own education through the senior dissertation process. The senior dissertation process is an opportunity to pursue educational interests at a deeper level and to demonstrate an ability to succeed beyond high school. With the guidance of teachers and advisors, all graduating seniors complete a unique, self-designed project and organize dissertation committee meetings.

We encourage students to take responsibility for their community by requiring attendance at our weekly all-school meeting and by expecting each student to take part in community service each quarter.

How Students Are Taught at Pacific Crest

Education/learning is a lifelong process. Our goal at Pacific Crest is two-fold:

- To empower students to direct their own learning so they can keep up with an ever-changing world
- To foster a love for learning

To accomplish these goals our approach is wide-ranging and creative. Education at Pacific Crest takes place both in and outside the classroom. Students take courses in the major subject areas and a variety of electives, get involved in service-oriented opportunities, engage in special projects and independent study, and participate in field trips.

We use proficiency-based, narrative evaluations rather than traditional grades in order to give students a deeper understanding of their accomplishments and areas for improvement. The student portfolio is another important evaluative tool; it is a showcase for academic and extracurricular work samples.

Teachers and staff at Pacific Crest serve students by:

- Creating a safe, welcoming learning environment;
- Maintaining small classes (twelve-student average);
- Offering a flexible program within clearly defined parameters;
- Providing a great deal of adult guidance (advisors, teachers, committees, college guidance);
- Giving students choices;
- Hiring teachers with real-life experience and varied teaching styles;
- Teaching compassion and accountability as a natural part of the social structure of the school;
- Having fun and valuing play;
- Respecting students and the challenges they face as adolescents moving into young adulthood;
- Welcoming parents and community members;
- Preparing students for adult life.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum

Curriculum Fundamentals

With the guidance of their advisor and parents, each student pursues their own educational goals through an individually designed academic plan.

- A student's coursework, projects, and activities depend upon their goals and current educational status relative to state guidelines.
- The portfolio of work samples is an important record of the student's accomplishments; the student is responsible for building and maintaining their portfolio.
- Pacific Crest maintains a transcript of classes that a student has taken as well as copies of course evaluations.
- Courses may be initiated by student or teacher request.
- The School Meeting, a student-run forum, dictates daily governance issues and is an important avenue for communication and community building.
- All students attend school for a minimum of five and a half hours per day.
- All students complete the minimum hourly service requirements for their grade level.
- All seniors complete a semester-length dissertation project of their design.

Advisor

Each student at Pacific Crest is assigned to a faculty member who will serve as his or her academic advisor. The responsibilities of the advisor include:

- Helping the student make their course selection and build their schedule at the beginning of every term
- Monitoring the overall academic progress of the student and maintaining the student's EPP (Educational Plan and Profile) in order to ensure the student is on track for promotion or graduation
- Helping students build and maintain their portfolio
- Conferencing with the student and parents at the end of each semester, or more often if needed
- Serving as the point person for communication for parents or outside parties (i.e., tutors, coaches, etc.)

Many students confuse the role of the advisor with the notion of the one trusted adult on staff in whom they can confide. It is our goal that students will build trusting relationships with all staff members at Pacific Crest. However, often a student connects better with a teacher who is not their advisor. This is absolutely fine and sometimes preferable given the overall academic nature of the advisor's responsibilities.

Ideally a student will have the same advisor for the duration of their time at Pacific Crest. This model helps maintain continuity throughout the student's educational journey. An advisor switch is very rare and is warranted only by the school's need to balance students among advisors or if a student/advisor pairing is particularly unproductive.

Advisors will welcome the opportunity to communicate with you about your child's progress at intervals that work best for you. At a minimum, you will receive some type of written feedback every 5 weeks in the form of mid-quarter or quarterly progress reports. Beyond that, feel free to reach out to your child's advisor at any time if you feel like you need more information. Each advisor has a preferred method of communication (phone, email, etc.) so be sure to establish what will work best for you both at the beginning of the year.

Educational Options

Classes

Pacific Crest Community School offers a diversity of courses with creative approaches to core standards. Most classes follow a discussion format and can range in size from just a few students to over twenty, with the average being about ten to twelve. Classes vary in length from ten weeks (one quarter) to the entire school year (two semesters).

Teachers design and propose classes and course content, but students are also encouraged to suggest course topics based on interest. Based on the number of students interested in a proposed course topic and on curricular applicability, teachers do their best to offer courses suggested by students or to integrate suggested topics into course curriculum whenever appropriate. The staff reviews offered courses and the schedule quarterly.

Credit vs. Audit

Credits are standard units accepted by accredited schools communicating that a student has learned a given body of material. As an accredited school Pacific Crest can award credits and has a simple policy for doing so:

- When taking a class for credit a student will fulfill all of the obligations as outlined by the teacher at the beginning of the course.
- Each semester teachers will indicate on the evaluation form whether a student has fulfilled these obligations. If a student has not fulfilled the teacher's expectations in the class, he or she will not receive credit.
- If the student has fulfilled the requirements, the class will then be recorded on the student's transcript for credit. The transcript is maintained by the school and can be obtained upon request.

Most classes at Pacific Crest are taken for credit. The student commits to doing the readings and assignments, and to participating in the discussions. If a student appears to be failing to meet the class requirements (i.e. absences, missing assignments, etc.) the teacher will arrange to meet with the student to discuss the situation and determine a solution. If a student has not improved their performance by the end of the evaluation period they will **not** be moved to audit status, but rather will receive **no credit** on the transcript.

Sometimes a student is interested enough in a particular topic to participate in the class but not do all the assignments. With the teacher's consent, the student may audit the class. Teachers will provide students with a description of the credit and audit requirements on the first day of the course, at which point students will make their choice. Students should make arrangements with the teacher prior to auditing a class. At the completion of a course, the student's transcript will reflect whether it was completed for credit or audit.

Teachers may decide that in a particular class it would be too disruptive to have auditors. Those classes would be for credit only.

Special Projects

Our purpose at Pacific Crest is to educate our students in ways that excite them. To that end we use special projects, or educational opportunities presented non-traditionally. Programs such as service learning, mock trial, rock climbing, robotics, drumming and filmmaking are examples of special projects. These are all programs that vary slightly from the traditional notion of a class, either in format and/or subject matter. At Pacific Crest we find these offerings to be stimulating opportunities to connect with real world activities.

Independent Study

Some students are interested in pursuing topics that are not available in class format or want to explore a subject in more depth than we can provide in a group setting. These students are highly encouraged to pursue their interests independently, under staff and/or mentor supervision.

An Independent Study Application must be completed and submitted to the student's advisor if the student wants to receive academic credit. This must be done within the first two weeks of the term for credit to apply that term. Independent studies must be completed in one quarter, and can be worth one-quarter academic credit.

Community Service and Service Learning

The role of the Pacific Crest community service program is to provide service opportunities for all students and to help them reflect on their participation. Community service strengthens relationships within the Pacific Crest community and provides connections with outside organizations and groups; it supports personal growth, helps students gain life skills, and builds empathy. Service is done exclusively for the benefit of others and the student does not receive any compensation (payment, vouchers, etc.). This requirement can be fulfilled at school or in the outside community.

In addition to including service work in their portfolio, students are expected to complete and record minimum hourly service requirements each quarter, depending on their academic level and enthusiasm. The beginning level (middle school) requires at least 4 hours service each quarter; intermediate (9th-10th grade) requires at least 6 hours; advanced (11th-12th grade) requires at least 8 hours. Participation is recorded by the student in Google Classroom on a service record form. In addition to recording hours of participation, students also complete written reflections; space for this writing is provided on the form. Once filled out, these forms are approved by the service learning coordinator and kept on file for determining student in

good standing status, for use in awarding service learning commendation, and in order to maintain a record of individual and whole-school service involvement. Upon graduation, students have the opportunity to earn special recognition for exemplary community service. Please see our service learning coordinator for opportunities and details about this program.

Tracking Student Progress

Pacific Crest has three approaches to recording and communicating a student's accomplishments: the portfolio, quarterly evaluations, and the transcript.

Portfolios

Every student at Pacific Crest maintains a portfolio of his or her work. The portfolio might include essays, artwork, science lab records, personal reflections, community service descriptions and feedback, or any other product of the student's learning activities. The portfolio tells the story of the student's accomplishments at Pacific Crest, shows the growth of their abilities, and provides a record that is more substantial and informative than a simple list of grades. Submission of the portfolio is an important component in the college application process.

Students work with their advisor to maintain, organize, and improve their portfolios. Work can be put into the portfolio anytime; however, once per semester, time is set aside in the schedule for students to work exclusively on their portfolios.

Students review their portfolios annually in conferences with their parents and advisor. These conferences give students a chance to show off their accomplishments and to reflect on where they are in terms of meeting their personal goals, demonstrating essential skills, and working toward graduation.

Quarterly Evaluations

Evaluation of student progress is completed at each mid-quarter and at the end of each quarter. Teachers evaluate students in terms of the course goals and expectations, taking into consideration each student's individual potential. These evaluations are narrative and are designed to give students relevant feedback regarding strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Transcripts

A transcript is maintained by Pacific Crest for each student. It is an official record that lists which classes the student completed and whether credit was earned. The transcript is a useful tool that is referenced at every semester conference in order to evaluate the previous semester and plan for future academic work. The transcript reflects the student's diversity of interests and summarizes his or her accomplishments in terms of academics.

Student in Good Standing Policy

Pacific Crest Community School was designed so that students will be inspired to learn to their greatest capability. This learning takes place in the classroom, through interacting with other students, staff, family or out in the community. All of these experiences are considered to be a part of the curriculum.

Developing the skills required to create an individual academic plan can be challenging for students. The following procedures have been developed to support each student's choices and their achievement.

Student in Good Standing Policy:

In order to attend PCCS a student must want to participate in his or her education, and must demonstrate that desire by applying him or herself. How this effort manifests itself is completely dependent upon the goals, talents, and capabilities of each student. A “**Student in Good Standing**” is defined as a student who is:

- Receiving credit or meeting expectations in **all** courses in which the student is enrolled.
- Completing the Community Service expectation.
- Attending School Meeting.
- Maintaining an updated portfolio.
- Complying with the Behavioral Expectations (as outlined in the next section).

Course Add/Drop Policy:

The first two weeks of each quarter is the period in which students have time to consider course offerings and commit to their course schedules. During this period teachers proceed with course syllabi, so students are encouraged to commit to classes as early as possible. Nevertheless, students should only take classes in which they will fully apply themselves.

Withdrawal After Add/Drop Period:

Students may not drop courses after the initial add/drop period (the first two weeks of the semester). High school students who choose to withdraw from a class after the add/drop period will receive a "W" on their official transcript. Withdrawing from a class must be planned with the advisor and must not be for reasons relating to personal enjoyment of the material. Withdrawal after the add/drop period will not impact grade point average. During the college admissions process students with one or more "Ws" on their transcripts may be required to explain their reasons for withdrawing.

Mid-Quarter Progress Reports:

At mid-quarter, all students receive reports on their progress in each class. If at this time a student is in danger of not receiving credit for the class he or she will have time to rectify the situation. A student may find he or she is over-scheduled and cannot maintain the pace of the course load. In this case the student should meet with his or her advisor to discuss the option of petitioning the teacher to audit or withdraw from the class. ***A student must meet with his or her advisor and receive teacher approval for changes to take place at the mid-quarter.***

Quarterly Evaluations:

At the end of each quarter, each student's progress is assessed and recorded on his or her transcript. Most students receive credit in all of the classes for which they have enrolled. Nevertheless, if a student is not in good standing, he or she may be placed on academic probation.

Academic Probation:

A student who is not receiving credit in the minimum number of classes (7) may be placed on academic probation. A student may be on academic probation as a result of not completing a test or assignment, or it may be as a result of other, more considerable, challenges. The severity of academic problems can range from minimal to quite serious. Nevertheless, academic probation is a serious concern for the student and staff.

Students on academic probation are encouraged to work with their advisor, teachers, and parents to achieve good standing status. The student's improvement will be supported in the following manner:

1. The advisor will meet with the student to design a plan for getting the student back on track.
2. Parents will discuss the situation with the advisor and the student and assist in their progress. Parents are encouraged to call if there are questions.
3. A letter may be sent home to communicate that a student is on academic probation and to clarify what the student must do in order to achieve "in good standing" status.

In the uncommon circumstance that a student remains on probation through the end of the following quarter, it may be determined that Pacific Crest is not an appropriate school for the student. Whether the student continues to attend will be discussed by the faculty at a Staff Meeting and determined after a conference between the student, the parents, the advisor, and an administrator.

Graduation Requirements

Seniors who are ready to graduate with Pacific Crest diplomas have:

- Successfully completed 28 credits with minimum distribution as follows:
 - Language Arts—4
 - Math—3 (Algebra 1 and above)
 - Science—3 (1 lab science)
 - Social Studies—3 (1 U.S., .5 Econ, .5 Govt.)
 - World Language—2 (must be the same language)
 - P.E.—1
 - Health—.5
 - Art/Technology—2

The remainder of the credits may be distributed in any way among the subject areas.

- Successfully completed the Senior Dissertation process as outlined in the course Senior Seminar
- Received faculty approval of their Senior Portfolio (see page 19)
- Completed their Service Learning requirements (see page 19)
- Complied with the school's Behavioral Policies (see page 29)

Graduation

The graduation ceremony is the culmination of the senior year. It is an exciting and very original celebration. This is one of the most important single events of the school year. It is a wonderful opportunity to honor the successes of the senior students and to wish them well in the future. The event is not limited to seniors and their families. All juniors are required to assist with graduation preparation and to attend the ceremony. Junior and sophomore families also assist with the planning and setup of the graduation celebration. All community members are invited and encouraged to attend this community celebration.

Field Trips

Pacific Crest is a small school run by a small group of teachers. The world is large and the number of topics to learn about is vast. As much as is feasible we have chosen to use the world as our classroom. Field trips are a way to venture out into that classroom and for our students to have hands-on experiences.

We try to schedule these activities and alert families in advance, but that isn't always possible. Sometimes we only find out about an event at the last minute.

Behavioral Expectations on Field Trips

Students on field trips are representing the entire school. At all times we expect appropriate, cooperative, respectful behavior in accordance with all school policies.

COMMUNITY

Community

Building a sense of community is an essential part of the Pacific Crest philosophy. It is so important that it is part of our full name: Pacific Crest *Community* School. Community participation helps to develop social skills, namely empathy and tolerance for diverse ideas and abilities. It teaches students the importance of service to others through the community service opportunities it provides. A sense of solidarity, pride, and personal connection is fostered through the participation of the entire school community—students, teachers, staff, and parents—in community-building experiences.

Our weekly school meeting represents one vital aspect of our community-oriented program. School meeting is an opportunity for students to engage in democracy in action. It fosters a sense of personal agency within one's community and allows for students to take leadership roles.

In addition to school meeting there are myriad opportunities for community building within the Pacific Crest program. Some are explicitly built-in experiences, like Camp Tapawingo, the rock climbing team, our annual Toilet Bowl Thanksgiving Extravaganza, talent shows, potlucks, or our annual all-school fun day. Some are more implicit experiences, like the fact that our classes are so small, spontaneous field trips, or board games in the community room, for example. And many community-building opportunities are community service oriented, such as the annual JOIN Immersion, working at the Children's Book Bank, or serving meals at the Blanchet House. We encourage all students and parents to be a part of the Pacific Crest community and to enrich it by bringing personal interests and ideas to the community.

School Meeting

The School Meeting is the weekly forum at which students and staff, discuss problems, celebrate achievements, and distribute information important to the school as a whole. Students and staff are expected to attend, as participation at the school meeting is vital to the health of our school. Student volunteers run each meeting; students can sign up for this opportunity in the office.

Any student or staff member can submit an item for consideration. The meetings are run according to Robert's Rules of Order and cover four general areas:

- "Cool Things" at PCCS
- Announcements
- Discussion Items
- Action Items

The agenda forms are available in the office and must be submitted prior to the meeting.

Most issues require a majority vote of those present for passage and these decisions are then binding school wide.

Parents are invited to attend any school meeting.

Pacific Crest Community School Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

We, the people of Pacific Crest Community School, present this document for the betterment of our school. The purpose of this constitution is to define the ideals of this community and to create guiding principles that apply to general conduct. We have then formed this constitution for the benefit and growth of our educational community.

Students have these fundamental rights:

- Respect for one's physical and psychological space.
- Freedom to speak one's opinion freely.
- Respect for personal property.
- Respect for personal beliefs.
- Respect for different abilities and skills.
- Receive fair discipline in accordance to school policy, rules, and expectations.

Students have the fundamental responsibility to:

- Demonstrate respect and kindness toward other members of the school community
- Attend school 5.5 hours per day, averaged over the course of the week to be 27.5 hours.
- Attend all School Meetings.
- Report all absences by 8:30 AM.
- Actively pursue both short and long-term academic goals.
- Assist other students in their academic achievement.
- Contribute to the school community by taking leadership, supporting other student's initiative, attending events, and volunteering.
- Complete a Community Service or Service Learning Project each quarter.
- Follow the academic and behavioral guidelines as outlined by the School Meeting, your advisor, and your teachers.

Adopted by the School Meeting 5/17/94

BEHAVIORAL POLICIES

Behavioral Policies

Attending Pacific Crest Community School is a privilege. The students of Pacific Crest have made a commitment to their education and to the community of the school; the school's environment of openness and support is fundamental to the success of our students.

We expect students to be self-disciplined and to cooperate with each other and the staff. We believe that lists of rules and regulations about unacceptable student behavior are not necessary, and that conscience, honesty and good sense are the basic guide to behavior.

Students are expected to behave with respect for self and others, safety, integrity, inclusiveness and a sense of community. Any action that threatens the physical, mental, or emotional safety of students or staff is unacceptable. Harassment or bullying in any form is not tolerated on or off campus, on the Internet or in person.

Inappropriate student behavior is generally seen as a learning opportunity. Our primary goals in our disciplinary system are to educate students and to treat them as fairly as possible when rules are broken. The student may have restrictions imposed, and/or may be separated from the school community either short term (suspension) or indefinitely (expulsion). The staff may make recommendations for appropriate disciplinary action but the director ultimately decides the appropriate disciplinary action, at her sole discretion. If the student(s) or parents are in disagreement with the director's decision, a review of that decision may be performed by one or more board members. It should be kept in mind that PCCS is a private school and not subject to the same rules as public schools.

Attendance Policy

If a student is ill or unable to attend school for other reasons, please notify the school by 8:30 a.m. *The student is responsible for the information he or she missed as a result of the absence.* The student should talk to his or her teachers in advance if they know they are going to be absent (vacation, medical appointment, or fieldtrip) or as soon as possible upon returning after an illness.

When a student fails to meet the attendance requirement for any two-week period of time (average of 27.5 hour per week), the advisor will schedule a conference with the student and parent. A plan will be developed to help the student improve attendance. If the student again fails to meet the attendance requirement for another two-week period, the staff will schedule another conference with the student and parent. The plan will be reassessed and revised as necessary. The student and parent will be informed that if the student again fails to meet the attendance requirement for any two-week period, he/she may be expelled.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The use of drugs or alcohol at school or during a school event is inconsistent with the mission of PCCS.

If a student uses, possesses, conspires to buy, sell or provide drugs or alcohol during school hours, on school property, or during a school event (overnights included) the following will occur:

1. The student will be immediately suspended. If the student is on an overnight field trip at the time of the suspension, the parents must arrange transportation home for the student.
2. The student and parents will meet with the director immediately to determine the consequences of the student's actions. The most likely consequence will be expulsion.
3. Review of the director's decision may be performed by the Board of Directors.

Important Note: We recognize that abuse of alcohol and other drugs is a treatable health problem. Students who are concerned about themselves or a fellow student are encouraged to take the initiative to seek help from an adult. Any student identified, by self or others, as possibly having a problem involving alcohol or drug use may be encouraged to seek professional consultation and treatment, even if there has not been a violation of school rules.

Smoking/Vaping Policy

Smoking or the use of tobacco or nicotine products is prohibited during school hours or during a school sponsored event (overnights included). Smoking/vaping is prohibited on campus at all times. Violating this policy will result in the same sequence of consequences as a violation of the drug & alcohol policy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know my student is progressing and learning if he/she is not getting grades?

Parents and students who ask this question are probably referring to record keeping and reporting concerns. Individual students and parents may also have particular goals in mind when they ask questions, such as, “Will my student be ready for college?”

Record keeping and reporting student progress is handled in three ways: portfolios, quarterly evaluations, and transcripts. The portfolio is compiled by the student and is an important indicator of the quality of work of which a student is capable. The quarterly evaluations give students and teachers an opportunity to assess progress and address strengths and areas for improvement in a narrative format. Transcripts are a record of classes taken and whether credit was earned in each class; they are on file in the office for use when students transfer to other educational settings or apply to colleges. When a student is ready to apply to college we are able to convert the verbal equivalents on a student’s evaluations to a numerical indicator of GPA.

Advisors and parents provide guidance and suggestions about a student’s curriculum according to the needs of the individual student. The semester parent-student-advisor meetings are the place to discuss future plans so the student knows how to stay on track for his or her own particular goals.

As one Pacific Crest student once put it, “If I know something today that I didn’t know yesterday, I know I’m learning.”

What happens when a student must miss a class for a special activity?

There are times when special projects or activities will interfere with a particular on-going class. These projects are valued at Pacific Crest! If a student needs to miss a class, or even a whole day’s classes because they have a field trip, rehearsal, or other special project that day, it is usually okay, so long as there is adequate communication between the student and his or her teachers. To help minimize the disruption, your student needs to let the appropriate teacher know, **in advance**, that they will be absent because of a project and to plan with that teacher to make up any missing work.

The teachers at Pacific Crest will do their best to accommodate excused absences, but they expect the student to take responsibility for communicating and making up any work in a reasonable amount of time. Students should avoid “double scheduling” themselves and creating regular time conflicts in their schedules by making appropriate choices.

Occasionally conflicts occur because the teacher is involved in a special project that prevents him or her from conducting a regularly scheduled class. Sometimes the teacher will arrange a substitute teacher for the class that day, sometimes he or she will have a project or assignment for the students to do on their own, and sometimes he or she may cancel the class for the day. In any event, the teacher will let the class know in advance what the plan will be for that day.

How much homework is there for students at Pacific Crest?

As in all schools, homework at Pacific Crest varies according to the particular class. Each teacher sets his or her own requirements for each class. The purpose of homework at Pacific Crest is to supplement the class, to demonstrate skill mastery, and to produce work samples for portfolio inclusion.

At the beginning of each class the teacher describes the requirements for the student to receive credit for that class. It is up to the student to decide whether they want to take the class for credit or to audit the class (see “credit vs. audit” section above). Students should consider all their commitments when making their class choices in order to create a well-balanced schedule for themselves. Activities like Mock Trial, Rock Climbing, drama, and others often involve outside work.

How do you meet the needs of all students in multi-age/multi-skill level classes at Pacific Crest?

Because we are a small school with small classes we know our students’ capabilities and we can vary our expectations accordingly. Teachers are also available outside of class time to help students with class work. In many situations we can have students in the same class who are at different educational levels (which doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with age). Assignments are broad and project-based and can be done at individual levels of complexity. These types of classes lend themselves well to age mixing. Other classes that are built upon previous information, for example math classes, tend to be more homogenously grouped.

My student is new to Pacific Crest. What will the transition be like?

For some students Pacific Crest is a very new and different environment. Some students need a certain amount of time to adjust to this change. The length of time required will vary from student to student. Each student has an advisor who helps and encourages his or her transition into Pacific Crest. If you have concerns about your child’s transition, please talk to your advisor.