



Prairie Academy

**Parent and Student Handbook
2022-2023**

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(updated July 2022)

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Purpose of Handbook

This handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that parents and guardians may have during the school year. Because the Handbook contains information about student and parent expectations and responsibilities, parents and students are responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information and keep this Handbook available for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the school year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings when questions arise.

Prairie Academy School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this Handbook at any time during the year. If any written modification or amendment is made to this Handbook, a copy of such modification or amendment will be distributed to parents and guardians.

If you have any questions about the Handbook or any of its policies, please contact Mrs. Nedaa.

Vision

Prairie Academy aspires to instill a natural love of learning and inspires children to become compassionate, competitive global citizens.

Mission

Prairie Academy is committed to developing individuals that are compassionate, curious, and confident global citizens. Our small, nurturing environment supports a solid academic foundation with an emphasis on treating children as responsible and capable learners in an environment that promotes independence, creativity, strong character, and spiritual awareness.

Values

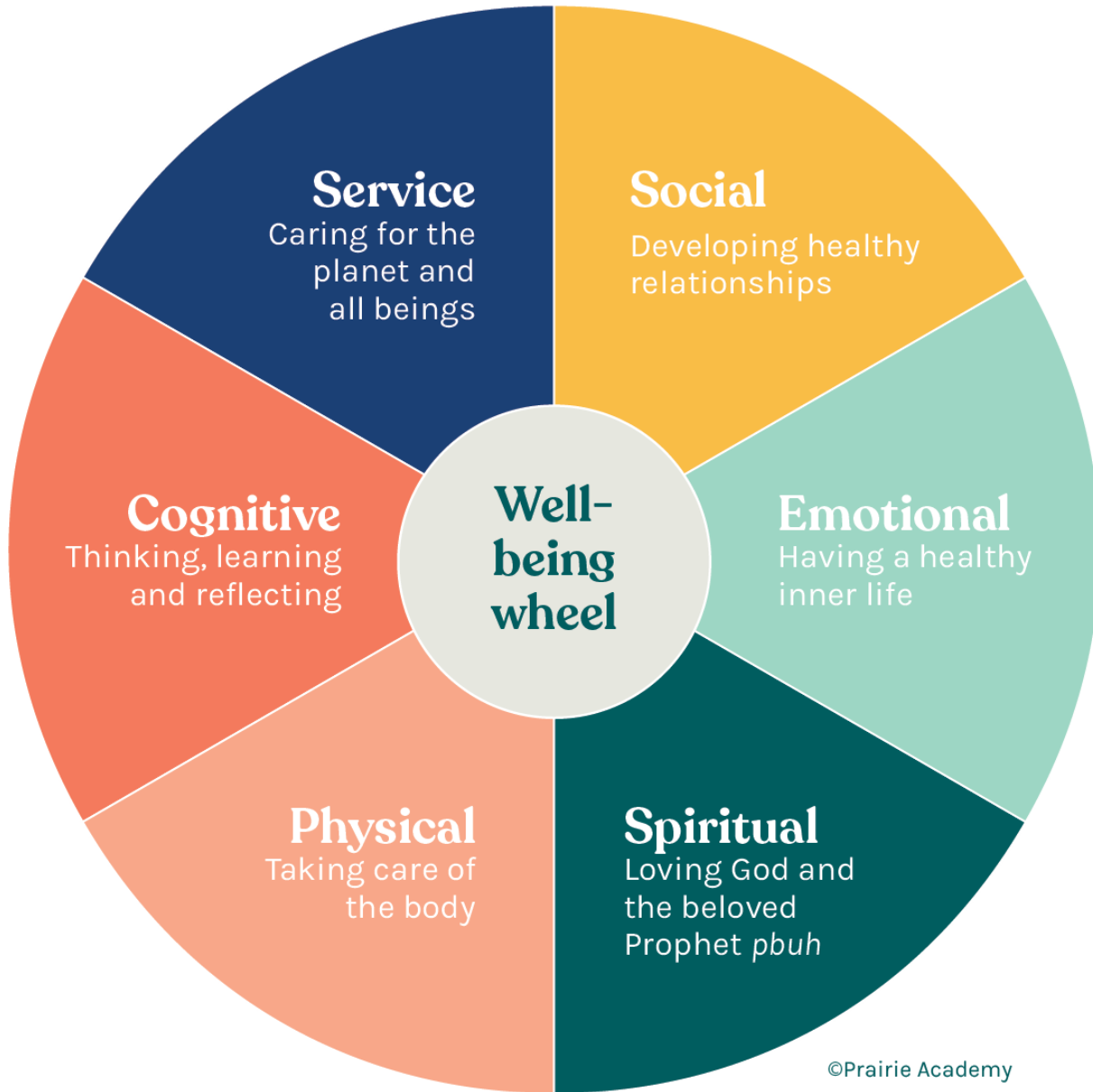
The following core values guide our teaching, relationships, and leadership at Prairie Academy:

- We are committed to helping all children reach their potential by providing a strong academic curriculum.
- We foster a family environment where every member of our community is cared for.
- We encourage an environment where our families take an active role both in and out of the classroom.
- We respect the talents and gifts of our community members and embrace our similarities and differences.
- We bring our personal best to the table and strive for excellence.
- We hold each other and ourselves accountable for our efforts and conduct.
- We uphold trustworthiness and transparency.
- We embrace innovative teaching and education methods to ensure that our students are prepared for an ever-changing world.

Educational Model

Prairie Academy uses the “Well-Being Wheel.” The curriculum is designed to cultivate the whole child. Using the Well-Being Wheel, Prairie’s team engages each child’s on the cognitive, physical, social, spiritual + emotional level. The curriculum includes:

- Hands-on activities
- Exploration-based learning
- Project-based learning
- Individualized instruction
- Engaging in spirituality and service
- Learning social skills with child-initiated problem solving



PRAIRIE ACADEMY SCHOOL

2022-2023 CALENDAR

August		November					February					May								
LEGEND Teacher Institute (school closed) P/T Conferences (school closed) Open House +Intake First + Last Day of School	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19	14	15	16	17	18	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26	21	22	23	24	25	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31			28	29	30			27	28				29	30	31		
September		December					March					June								
HOLIDAYS + BREAKS (school closed) 9/5 Labor Day 10/7-10/10 Fall Break 11/21-11/25 Thanksgiving 12/22-1/4 1st Winter Break 1/16 MLK Day 2/20-2/24 2nd Winter Break 4/10-4/14 Spring Break 4/21-4/24 Eid 5/29 Memorial Day 6/19 Juneteenth	1	2				1	2				1	2	3			1	2			
	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	6	7	8	9	10	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	13	14	15	16	17	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29		26	27	28	29	30	27	28	29	30	31	26	27	28	29	30
OCTOBER		January					April													
*Eid dates are tentative. Prairie follows the lunar calendar and will confirm days off closer to Eid. * In the case of unexpected school closure, days will be added at the end days will be added at the end of the academic year.	3	4	5	6	7	2	3	4	5	6	3	4	5	6	7					
	10	11	12	13	14	9	10	11	12	13	10	11	12	13	14					
	17	18	19	20	21	16	17	18	19	20	17	18	19	20	21					
	24	25	26	27	28	23	24	25	26	27	24	25	26	27	28					
	31					30	31													

Communication Guidelines

Parents are encouraged to communicate all policy and school wide concerns to the head of school. If parents feel their concerns have not been resolved through the teachers and administration they may bring their concerns to the school board.

All classroom-related questions and concerns should be sent directly to the teachers via email. Teachers are required to respond to parent communication within a 24 hour period. Parents who have questions should follow the following steps:

- If parents have questions concerning the day-to-day activities and/or work of their child, contact the classroom teacher.
- If parents have questions about the school's strategic plan, governance, board membership, finances, planning, or similar questions, they should contact the head of school.
- For tuition or other financial concerns or questions, parents are asked to contact finance@prairieacademy.org
- Parents are welcome to communicate with the head of school via email for all non-urgent issues and should allow for a 24 hour period response time.
- For all urgent issues, please call or text head of school.

The same communication sequence is recommended if parents have specific concerns:

- If there is a classroom concern, parents should contact the teacher directly.
- If the situation is still unresolved, parents may contact the head of school.

Attendance, Drop-Off + Pick Up

Doors open daily at 8:30am.

The start of the instructional day officially:

Begins at 9:00am

Ends at 3:30pm

Attendance Policies

Students are expected to be at school every day. Frequent absences and tardiness seriously affect academic progress and are disruptive to the teaching environment. Each day is a crucial part of a student's education. What transpires in the classroom environment is difficult to duplicate. Daily attendance is extremely important.

Prairie Academy requests that parents and students thoughtfully consider the effects of any absence other than one of a medical or family emergency. Prairie Academy has instituted a fall, winter and spring break. Parents are asked to plan trips during regular school vacation times. Days taken off for pleasure trips or vacations are considered unexcused. Whenever possible, regularly scheduled doctor/dental/medical appointments should be made outside of school hours.

Absences totaling 10 days or more in a given year, regardless of the reason, may result in attendance probation, remaining in the current level, or a request to withdraw from school.

Excused Absences

- Illness validated by a parent or guardian. For an extensive illness involving at least 3 days of absence, the school requires a statement from a physician stating the nature of illness, when a child is released to return to school, and whether there are any limitations to activity. The note should be submitted to the head of school.
- Illness or death in the immediate family.
- Any student not well enough to attend all of his or her classes during the school day may not participate in Prairie Academy's after school programs.

Unexcused Absences

All other absences from school will be considered unexcused, subject to the review and discretion by the head of school.

Tardies to School

Prairie Academy considers the prompt arrival of students to school each morning to be critically important. Families are asked to plan their mornings accordingly, so that they can comply with arrival times and thereby allow for a smooth start within each classroom. When younger children arrive late, it violates their sense of order, of what is right and what is expected and of how things are supposed to be.

Attendance, Drop-Off + Pick Up, Con't

Prairie Academy is committed to the successful start of each school day. School Doors open at 8:30am. All students must be in class by 9:00am. The head of school may notify parents when a student has five unexcused tardies or 10 total tardiness. Persistent problems throughout the school year result in negative statistics for the child's record which are requested by subsequent schools, and so we encourage each family's cooperation. Chronic tardiness may result in the student not being allowed to re-enroll for the following school year.

Please be prompt in both arrival and dismissal. It is very important that each student be in the classroom on time, as late arrivals and early departures disrupt classroom culture and detract from learning time. To prevent classroom disruption and ensure a smooth transition at drop-off, non-faculty and staff members will not be allowed in the classroom without permission from the head of school. We love parents and want them in our school, so please do not interpret this policy as an indication that parents are not welcomed. We simply want to ensure that your children are focused on the learning facilitated by their teachers!

Dismissal

Prairie will enforce a late pickup of \$5 for each 5 minutes after 3:35p.m. The fee will automatically be included on your monthly tuition invoice. Parents/guardians must inform, via whatsapp or email, Prairie Academy of the name of the person who is picking up their child on any day when they themselves are not. The "authorized pick-up person" must be at least 18 years old and may be asked to provide a photo ID to the staff.

Drop-off Procedures

Parents + Caretakers are allowed to walk their children into the building in the mornings. We will not use a formal car line for morning drop-off, instead:

- Parents can pull-up to the front of the entrance and have their children exit on their own if they are cable.
- Once your child is out of the car, we ask that you leave promptly to ensure smooth transitions for other families.
- Parents are not allowed to pull up to the school, and park next to one another in front of the school. This will create disruption and delays for other families trying to come in and out of the lot.
- If you are not getting out of your car and dropping off your child, please use the car lane method, e.g. one-car behind the other.
- If you are walking your child in, your car must be parked in one of the designated parking spots in the lot.
- All adults who will be walking children to the front door or into the front area of the school, must wear a mask before exiting their car.

- Parents + Guardians must leave the building immediately after dropping off their children. We love our parents, however morning time is a special time for teachers to get the day ready and welcome their students. If a parent would like to chat with a teacher, they must set up an appointment prior to engaging with any Prairie teacher/staff. Nedaa may ask parents to leave if they do not have an appointment.
- Parents are not allowed to enter from the “wrong-way” entrance.

Pick-Up Procedures

Unlike morning drop-offs:

- After School car lane will be enforced.
- Parents are to remain in their cars, children will be walked to them.
- Students will be brought to their cars in the order their rides arrive.

General Policies and Procedures

Indoor Shoe Policy

All students are required to change their shoes once inside the classroom. Inside shoes **must** have a rubber sole (i.e. crocs). Solid colors are *highly encouraged*.

Visitor Policy

We welcome vaccinated families (only) who have made appointments with the head of school and have a clear purpose for visiting. There will be no student visitors allowed unless they are a prospective student accompanied by a parent/guardian or a previously enrolled student.

Social Media Policy

Per (105 ILCS 75/) our school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. We may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is a sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy and we may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

Firearms and Drugs

Head of School must immediately notify local law enforcement officials of firearms incidents on school grounds. If a student is in possession of a firearm, then the head of school must immediately notify the student's parent or guardian and also immediately notify the local law enforcement.

Field Trips + Service Projects

This year we will resume monthly trips. Prairie will follow the recommendations of the medical team at the time of each trip. More communication will be sent prior to the trips.

Outdoor Play Weather Guidelines

Kids should **always** have gear at school for outdoor play. Parents need to ensure, raincoats, rainboots and rainsuits are sent in early on. For winter weather please send in heavy coat, snow pants and/or thermals, weather proof gloves, hats, and appropriate shoes (boots) at school **everyday**. Teachers will monitor local temp and wind chill (as this can vary then what is reported on weather apps) and decide what is appropriate each day with the following parameters: **If the temperature with wind chill is below 15 degrees**, outdoor play be limited to 30 mins. School staff will ensure kids are actually wearing their gear and that hands, heads, and noses are not exposed and feet/toes are adequately protected. **School staff will monitor local conditions and make the call.**

Non-Discrimination Act

If a teacher, student or family feels they for any reason are being discriminated against, they can bring the case to the head of school and will conduct an investigation. If the accusation is against the head of school or any administrator, the complaint must go directly to the board of school who will conduct their own investigation.

Health and Wellness Policies

No staff member or children should attend school if they exhibit signs of communicable illnesses. Parents of children that have been exposed to any type of high-risk virus or disease by any other student will be notified as soon as possible, and the student will be sent home with a note with the date and type of exposure. If your child becomes ill at school, you or your alternate emergency person will be called to **pick up your child immediately**. Our policy is to never administer medicine, vitamins, or special medical diets to any child. This should be administered by a parent or guardian only.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he or she will be sent home

- Diarrhea (more than once)
- Severe coughing
- Difficult, rapid breathing
- Consistently clear, dripping nose
- Ear ache
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Temperature of over 99 degrees F
- Lice, scabies or other parasites
- Vomiting

Please do not send your child to school if he or she

- has had fever during the previous 24 hours
- has heavy nasal discharge or constant cough
- has symptoms of possible communicable disease
- is not well enough to play outdoors

Your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Prairie has made it a strict policy to send children home if they returned to school with a fever or exhibiting symptoms of a fever.

Medication

School personnel cannot administer medication, including pain relievers, without explicit written parental/guardian permission. A permission form completed by the parent/guardian is required in the event a student must receive medicine at school. The medicine, in its original container, labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, dose and time to be given, doctor's name (if prescribed) and possible side effects, must be given to the head of school together with the signed permission form. Only medication that is necessary for a child to remain in school will be given during school hours. Whenever possible, the administration of medication to students should take place at home. All medicine is to be handled by adults only—at no time may any kind of medicine be handled or administered by a

Health and Wellness Policies, Con't

child. Children are not to carry medicine nor should it be placed in lunch boxes. This includes cough drops.

Children with Asthma

Parents must notify their child's teacher and head of school if their child has asthma or has been prescribed an inhaler by their doctor. Illinois state law requires that an extra inhaler must be given to the school to keep on-site at all times, in the case of an emergency

Immunization Records

Immunization records are required for all students. Immunizations must be kept current, and an immunization record must be kept on file in the School office. Students may not attend school without an appropriate immunization record. For returning students who receive an immunization on their birthdays, please provide the appropriate form denoting the type of immunization and date received.

No child will be admitted to class if all Illinois state health requirements are not met, including an updated immunization record.

Required Documents*	Who
Immunizations	❖ All incoming students
Vision and Hearing Exam*	❖ Kindergarten students ❖ First-grade students ❖ Second-grade students
Dental Exam	❖ Kindergarten students ❖ First-grade students ❖ Second-grade students
Birth Certificate	❖ All incoming students

Documents are **mandatory state requirements and must be submitted by the due dates below.*

**Your child may have already received a hearing and vision test as part of their annual, please check with your child's pediatrician.*

Covid 19 Health, MonkeyPox Health + Safety Guidelines

Please read more about about IDHP + ISBE's current guidelines regarding COVID-19 and MonkeyPox here:

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/school-guidance.html>

Facilities

Access to School

- Parents and visitors who are fully vaccinated will be allowed into the building, by appointment only.
- Meetings, including parent teacher conferences may be held in person this year. However, most meetings will remain virtual.

Ventilation of Classrooms

All of Prairie's classrooms and the front office have several windows which will remain open to ventilate the rooms. Fans may also be used to circulate the air as needed. During the hotter days in August/September, we will use fans or smaller AC units to keep classrooms at a comfortable temperature. If there is a heat wave and it is challenging to keep room temperature comfortable, we will close windows but alter the daily activities so there is more physical distance amongst children. As the building retains heat very well, these windows can remain open even during winter months.

Air Filtration

Air purifiers will be placed in classrooms to actively filter and clean the air.

Daily Cleaning Protocols

- Touchpoints such as entrance handles, stairwell handrails, tables, restroom faucet handles will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Students will wipe down their desks at the end of the day.
- Teachers will stay after and clean their room.
- A cleaning person will come in daily after school to clean and disinfect.
- Each classroom will have EPA-registered disinfectants and wipes to clean and disinfect throughout the day.

ON-SITE TESTING

Staff will use their discretion to administer rapid tests, if available, onsite to students if they exhibit symptoms.

Covid 19 Health + Safety Guidelines, Con't

Student and Faculty Handwashing, Cleaning and Sanitizing

Protocols for frequent hand washing and cleaning of surfaces (tables, computers, etc) will be in place for all students and staff as follows:

- Portable sinks have been placed in each classroom. Students and staff are required to wash for 20 seconds every time they enter a classroom, before and after lunch, snacks and recess.
- Hand sanitizers will be placed in the classrooms, hallways and front entrance of the school.
- Each student will be responsible for wiping down their own desk at the end of the day.

Face Masks

In compliance with the IDPH and ISBE recommendations, Prairie will continue to make masking optional this year. Please note that this may change based upon IDPH and ISBE guidelines. If a student is exhibiting symptoms or there is an outbreak onsite, we will require temporary masking based on case-by-case situations. Communication will be provided.

Students are to bring 5 masks a week and will be requested to wear a fresh clean one every morning when they come in.

- If a mask gets dirty at any point in the day, students will need to put a new mask on.
- Parents are responsible for washing the masks every week and returning them with their students every Monday.
- Masks must be put in a ziplock bag with their name written on it and kept in the students' bag.
- All masks must have your child's name written on it. Any mask found without a name will be discarded.
- Face masks must cover the nose and mouth and are in contact with cheeks and chin.
- Masks can not be shared even if they are unused. Mrs. Nedaa will provide a disposable mask for students who are without a mask for the day.

Determining when a Student will be Sent Home

A student will be sent home for any of the following reasons:

- **100.4 temperature** will not be allowed into the school and will be sent home.
- **ONE of the following**, even without fever: shortness of breath, constant coughing, new loss of smell or taste.
- **TWO of the following without fever:** chills/shivering, diarrhea, muscle aches, runny nose, sore throat, cough, headache.
- For families with siblings at Prairie or who carpool with other families: if a student exhibits any of the above, only the student will be sent home and not their siblings or students they carpool with.
- Children who develop signs and/or symptoms of illness while at school will be separated from other children and quarantined in designated and well-ventilated rooms. Parents and/or caregivers will be required to pick children up from school immediately.

If a student tests negative for Covid they must be symptom free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before returning to school. Families must provide a doctor's note or documented COVID-19 test showing negative upon return.

(Please note that this policy may change depending on testing availability in the future)

Traveling

Families who are traveling: Families must comply with Chicago's Emergency Travel Order. Additionally, all traveling families must submit trip details and negative testing results of children to Nedaa 2-3 days prior to return to school.

For INTERNATIONAL travel - Nedaa must be informed so that safe return to school can be enforced. International travel restrictions per CDC guidelines must be followed.

Snack and Lunch Policy

Beginning this school year, parents are required to provide both the daily snack and lunch for their child. Students have snacks twice daily, once in the morning and then again in the afternoon.

Packing the Daily Snacks and Lunch for your Child

Although snack time is offered twice daily, parents are only required to pack one extra item for snack time. Most students do not finish their lunch, thus the daily afternoon snack time will be the designated time for students to eat the remainder of their lunch. If you know for certain that your child regularly completes his/her daily lunch, feel free to add an additional snack.

You may label your children's snacks, designated snack compartments/pockets if you prefer, however it is not necessary as the teachers will be there to assist the students during both snack and lunchtime.

Healthy, snack suggestions and ideas may include,*

- Low-sugar, whole-grain breakfast cereals
- Hummus and Pita chips
- Sunbutter
- Nut-free trail mix
- Cut-up fruit (if pieces are small and soft enough to avoid choking)
- Graham crackers
- Cheese slices cut into fun shapes
- Applesauce
- Yogurt
- Applesauce
- Sliced or chopped veggies
- Whole-grain crackers topped with cheese
- Veggie sticks with low-fat ranch dip or hummus
- Low-fat granola bars
- Dried fruit
- Air-popped popcorn
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Pretzels
- Guacamole and pita chips

****Prairie Academy is a 100% nut-free environment. Due to safety and liability, any items containing nuts will be immediately removed from the classroom and thrown away.***

Prairie Academy Food and Celebration Policy

The purpose of our food policy is to promote healthy eating. Research on sugar has shown that sugar intake impacts student behavior, slows the brain, hampering memory and learning. We are working hard to help students learn how to take care of their bodies for their entire lives and develop habits that sustain them.

Due to student allergies, we do not allow families to send in food for birthdays. If you would like to come in to celebrate your child's birthday, there are lots of ways to do this. Please talk to your child's teacher about how to celebrate your child's birthday at school.

For birthdays or other events, parents may put non-food goody bags in kids' backpacks/cubbies, so children can take them home at end of the day. Please do not tell your child to give the goody bags to students during the day, as this will distract from classroom instruction.

During school parties, the PTA will provide snacks, including snacks with sugar. These parties will not exceed five times a year.

2022-2023 Annual Tuition, Deposit and Fees

A deposit in the amount of \$2,000 is required prior to enrollment. This deposit is due Monday, August 15th and is non-refundable. The deposit is prorated over the course of the school year and will be applied to your monthly payment.

Tuition can be paid in full or in monthly installments. The full amount of tuition is required regardless of:

- Student completion of the school year
- Snow days
- Absenteeism
- Holidays
- Teacher In-service days.

Prairie Academy will pursue any balances left outstanding regardless of whether or not a student has been in attendance.

Full-time tuition at Prairie Academy is \$16,500.

How to pay tuition and other school fees

- ❖ Chase Quickpay (free) - designate payment to finance@prairieacademy.org
- ❖ Zelle transfer (most banks have this option, its also free) - designate payment to finance@prairieacademy.org

PRAIRIE ACADEMY STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE

Please **initial** next to each item. We want to be sure you **understand and agree** to these policies.

- I/we understand the late pickup up fee is \$5.00 every 5 minutes after 3:40pm
- I/we understand the pick up policy for other than parental pick up.
- I/we understand the illness policy.
- I/we understand the Covid 19 Health and Safety Guidelines
- I/we understand the snack and lunch policy
- I/we understand the pick up and drop off policy
- I/we understand the attendance policy
- I/we understand the visitor policy
- I/we understand the party policy
- I/we understand the school communication policy

I/we have fully read, reviewed and understand Prairie Academy’s Student/Parent Handbook

Mother’sName (Printed): _____

Mother’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Father/Guardian Name(Printed): _____

Father/Guardian’s Signature: _____

Date: _____