



Family Handbook

2023/2024

Pilgrim Community Nursery School

460 Lake Street

Oak Park, IL 60302

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www.pilgrimschool.net

Dear families,

On behalf of the PCNS teachers, staff and school board, I would like to welcome you to Pilgrim Community Nursery School. Please read the family handbook in its entirety as it contains important information for the policies and procedures of our school and contains the 2023-24 school calendar. This handbook is also available for your reference on our website for easy future reference.

We are honored you have chosen us as partners in your child's first educational experience, please know I am here to answer any questions you may have. I can be reached by phone or in person during office hours of 8:15 to 1:30 Monday through Friday when school is in session. You can also reach me by email at emily.norman@pilgrimschool.net

Thank you for being part of our community,

Emily Norman, PCNS Director

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HISTORY AND ADMINISTRATION

MISSION STATEMENT

Pilgrim Community Nursery School (PCNS) is a non-profit nursery school serving families with children aged 2 to 5 years old. Our mission is to provide exceptional care to all children while fostering each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth in a play-based environment. PCNS strives to create an inclusive and joyful environment that reflects the diversity of Oak Park and our surrounding communities. We welcome children and families of all races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, family structures and economic situations.

HISTORY

Pilgrim Community Nursery School was established in 1966 as a mission of Pilgrim Church Outreach Program to provide a quality preschool program for children residing in Oak Park and surrounding communities. At the time, our preschool program consisted of two classrooms and eighteen children. Our program has flourished and currently can serve up to 88 children in our half-day program..

PHILOSOPHY

As Early Childhood Educators, we believe:

- Early childhood programs should be planned to stimulate the child's balanced growth in all areas of development including socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
- Each child has a unique rate of development, which should not be hurried or rushed. Different levels of growth and ability are expected, valued and accepted.
- Parents and families are a vital part of each child's life and should be actively involved in their child's education.
- Play is an essential part of the early childhood learning experience and should be reflected in the daily schedule. Children learn by doing, imitating, experimenting, and questioning.
- Young children learn best through self-selected, hands-on experiences and active participation with their environment. An environment rich in sensory and motor experiences invites a child to see and experience more.
- Intellectual development is approached developmentally with emphasis on process rather than product. Language enrichment is an integral part of all experiences provided.
- In an early childhood classroom, guidance should include positive reinforcement, firm and consistent procedures, and individual and group problem solving to encourage the children to move toward self-discipline, independence, and responsibility for their actions

ADMINISTRATION

The PCNS Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. In addition, PCNS is governed by a volunteer board of directors consisting of family members of PCNS children, church members and community members. Board members serve a minimum of

two years and focus on the oversight and guidance of our school. All families are welcome to attend the monthly PCNS board meetings at any time.

LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION

PCNS is licensed by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and is re-licensed every three years. Families are encouraged to review the [Summary of DCFS Standards for Daycare Centers](#) for quality assurance purposes. A printed copy is available upon request in the office.

Pilgrim is furthermore accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC, (www.naeyc.org). This accreditation acknowledges that Pilgrim has met additional stringent requirements for providing an exceptional preschool program. PCNS participates in the NAEYC accreditation process every five years and completes an annual comprehensive program evaluation. Findings of the annual program evaluation are provided to PCNS Board and Staff and available for review by families upon request.

CURRICULUM

PCNS's motto is "Play with Purpose" as deep immersive play allows children to explore, discover, negotiate, take risks, create meaning and solve problems – all the essential foundations for developing literacy, numeracy and social skills. Our play-based emergent curriculum approach supports both child initiated learning and teacher developed learning experiences. As each classroom consists of a unique collection of children, each classroom will adapt curriculum to support the individual interests and developmental needs of children enrolled in the classroom. Teaching teams of PCNS use Creative Curriculum foundations and Illinois Early Learning Standards and Guidelines to create a planned developmentally appropriate curriculum for activities in their classrooms.

ADMISSION

ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

Our school year runs September through May, with summer camp programming available. Children must meet the minimum age requirement by the first day of school for the class they are enrolled in for the school year. IE: Child must be 2 years of age for the two-year old classroom, 3 years of age for the 3-year old classroom and 4 years of age for the PreK classroom.

ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

PCNS strives to provide an enriching educational environment for all children, including children with special needs or disabilities. When enrolling children with special needs or disabilities, we partner with families to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made within our school

environment. Special needs may include, but are not to be limited to; allergies, medical conditions, developmental delays, physical challenges, behavior disorders, and social service involvement.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The enrollment process for has two stages:

PRIORITY ENROLLMENTS

Registration for the upcoming school year begins in early January for children of families who are currently enrolled at PCNS, are PCNS alumni families or are Pilgrim Congregational Church members.

NEW ENROLLMENTS

Registration opens to all community families in late January and is ongoing as space allows in the program until all placements are filled

ENROLLMENT FEES

Upon approved enrollment, a **non-refundable** registration fee and material fee is required to hold your placement in the program. An invoice for these fees will be added to your brightwheel account and are due within 10 business days. In the event there are more applications received than openings available, a wait list system will be used with applicants placed on the list in the order their applications were received with no fees collected.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

Families are required to complete and sign or provide the following forms prior to first day of school:

- Completed Enrollment Application
- Copy of child's certified Birth Certificate
- Current Certificate of Health Form including Family History (pg 2) completed and signed.
- New Student Information Survey
- Tuition Agreement
- Receipt of Family Handbook indicating that parent/s have read the "Discipline/Guidance" Policy and DCFS Summary of Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers
- Permissions Form
 - Appear in photos and videos connected with the PCNS school program. These photos and videos may be used in school newsletters, parent enrollment evenings, newspaper articles, websites, or other school related publications.
 - Have artwork and other projects in school publications, school events, websites.
 - Participate in Ages and Stages Questionnaire Developmental Screening Project
 - Participate in classroom and school family directory
 - Leave the school to go on walking field trips
 - Have a student teacher observe in their classrooms

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

All child information is confidential and will not be released either orally or in written form unless the school has received written permission from their parents/guardian.

PROGRAM POLICIES

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are 8:30 am -12:30 pm Monday through Friday, depending on classroom schedules. Extended care enrichment classes: Early Day and Stay & Play offer an additional hour of care between 7:30 am - 8:30 am or 11:30 am -12:30pm.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

PCNS operates Labor Day through Memorial Day and follows Oak Park Elementary School District 97 calendar. Summer Camp programming is available June - August. Please see the published school year calendar for exact dates of programming.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival and dismissal are conducted both inside and outside of the school, classrooms will share their drop-off and pick-up locations to families prior to the first day of school. PCNS uses brightwheel for daily sign in and out processes. Families and caregivers are responsible for downloading the brightwheel app, which will assign unique check in codes to all authorized pickup members. PCNS will display a scannable QR code for families to use for check in and out.

LATE ARRIVAL

Our drop off window closes at 8:45 am. If children arrive after that time, families will enter through the main door of the church. We understand that occasionally families will arrive late, however we encourage prompt arrival to ensure your child has the opportunity to participate in every planned activity within their classroom.

LATE PICK-UP

When parents and caregivers are more than 10 minutes late, their child will come to the Pilgrim school office to be supervised by the Director or Administrative Assistant while parents and emergency contacts are contacted via phone. Fifteen minutes after the scheduled pick-up time a \$5.00 late pick-up fee will be assessed. A \$1.00 per minute fee will be assessed for each minute thereafter. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be required to sign a release form that notes the time of pick-up and fee accrued.

ABSENCES

To inform of absences, families can either contact teachers and administrators through brightwheel or via email. If a child is absent from PCNS due to illness, please follow the illness policy guidelines as outlined in the Health and Safety Policies below.

PCNS PARKING AND AUTOMOBILE POLICY

The lot next to our building is rented for Oak Park River Forest High School staff parking during school hours, please do not park in this lot. There are 15-minute parking zones on Lake St. and Scoville for your convenience at arrival and departure times. Please observe the posted parking regulations. To maintain a healthy and safe environment, PCNS discourages the practice of idling cars in our parking area with the exception of maintaining interior or engine temperatures in the case of extreme weather conditions.

Drive up car drop off will be available October - May for family's convenience. Cars using drive up options enter the Church parking lot on Lake Street, turn right (east) and proceed around the parking lot perimeter, stopping near the playground fence. The Director and Administrative Assistant will meet you at your car, assisting in sign-in and your child's safe exit from your vehicle and entrance to school.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each daily classroom schedule is designed to support all areas of child development including free play, large motor, group time, and snack. As deep play is the learning foundation in our school, free play makes up the largest amount of time in which children are free to investigate and explore center areas such as dramatic play, creative arts, blocks, literacy, sensory and science, and table curricular activities. Depending on the weather, children will spend their large motor time either in the gym or outside on the enclosed playground or outdoor classroom.

Individual classroom schedules will be provided by your teachers prior to the first day of school. Schedules are also posted inside the classroom and reinforced with children using visual schedules to assist in learning the classroom routine.

SNACK

PCNS follows the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition and Wellness Guidelines for young children to provide a balanced healthy daily snack for all children. Snacks are available during the regularly scheduled school day and enrichment classes. Snacks may include a combination of:

Whole Grains Always	Fruit/Vegetables	Or	Dairy/Protein
Crackers	Fresh fruits or vegetables*		Cheese or cheese sticks
Rice Cakes	Dried fruits*		Yogurt
Pretzels *	Canned fruit in juice		Sunflower butter
Cold Dry Cereal	Fruit or vegetable sauces		Hummus
Fruit Cereal Bars			

* **Hard foods such as pretzels or carrots and dried fruits such as raisins are not served in 2-year old classrooms.**

All fresh fruit and vegetables will be thoroughly washed before serving, large pieces will be cut to reduce choking hazards for children. **If your child has food related allergies, please let us know immediately.** We welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss implementing a formal personalized health management plan including curricula modifications as needed including a Food Allergy Action Plan to be filled out by you and your doctor, and posting of food allergies in classroom and kitchen.

PEANUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT

PCNS does not serve or use peanuts or peanut products in our program. However, as community groups often meet in our building outside of school hours, we can not guarantee a peanut-free environment.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS

Families are always welcome to provide birthday snacks for their child's classmates. Pursuant to DCFS regulations, all snacks sent to school must be store bought and in the original sealed containers and **cannot** be homemade, or manufactured in a facility that processes peanuts. Small, healthy snacks are preferred, candles are not allowed. In lieu of party favors, families are welcome to read a favorite book to the class and donate a copy if you would like. Children often like to bring invitations for outside-of-school parties. If children bring invitations to school to hand out, we ask that the invitation go to all the children in the classroom. Teachers cannot be responsible for undelivered invitations.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is important for preventing the spread of illness. Children will wash hands:

- at the beginning of class,
- after being outdoors,
- after using the toilet,
- after coughing/sneezing into hands,
- after wiping/blowing their nose,
- after painting, gluing or other messy projects
- before and after playing at the water table/sensory table,
- before and after eating snacks.

BATHROOM ROUTINES

Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend PCNS, however familiarity with the toilet and toileting routines are encouraged. When toilet training your child at home, please let your child's teachers know so they can support this new skill while at school. Children using the bathroom will be supervised and encouraged to be self-sufficient in all aspects of toileting including undressing, wiping, flushing, redressing, and washing hands.

All children should have a complete set of clothes kept at PCNS. For children wearing diapers or pull ups to school, families are responsible for providing diapers/pull ups and wipes to school as well, monitoring your supplies regularly. Should a child have a toileting accident, teachers will help in changing clothes and will offer to take the child to the bathroom to clean up. Soiled clothing will be bagged and returned to the parent or caregiver in a sealed bag; we do not rinse out soiled clothing.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Preschool play is often messy. Though we provide smocks for painting and sensory play, please send your child in clothing that can get dirty. Simple play clothes make it possible for children to enjoy all school activities. Clothing should be roomy enough for freedom of movement, easily removable and washable. We encourage you to dress your child in clothing that is easy to pull up and down as they encourage independence in self care skills or changing in the event of toileting accidents.

Please provide a complete set of labeled seasonal appropriate clothing to be stored at school, including a pair of non-skid inside shoes and send in replacements as needed. **Children play outside for extended periods of time daily, weather permitting when temperatures are above 20 degrees and there is no heavy precipitation. Please ensure your child is prepared for outside play by having the appropriate clothing for outside weather: warm clothes, hat, coat, gloves/mittens, snow pants, boots, rain gear etc.** We ask that all children bring a backpack large enough to accommodate artwork, extra clothes, water bottles, etc.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are within walking distance of the school and may include visits to the Oak Park Library Main Branch, OPRF High School, Stevenson Park, the Euclid Avenue Fire Station, various local shops and restaurants. Families provide permissions for walking field trips on the required Permission Form at the beginning of each school year. Families will be informed of walking field trips in advance by their classroom teacher.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Children at PCNS are actively supervised by staff during the regular school day, inside and outside the building. Active supervision includes setting up the environment to maintain clear sight lines of children, teacher positioning to keep children in view, listening closely, frequent scan and counting, observation and direct interaction with children. Children are kept in sight lines by teachers for the majority of the school day, however, supervision for short intervals by sound- only is permissible, such as when a child is in the bathroom, as long as staff frequently check on children who are out of sight.

Appropriate teacher/student ratios are maintained during all hours of operation when children are present. Daily attendance and room changes will be documented through the brightwheel app throughout the day. Any time a classroom transitions to a different space either inside or outside, teachers will count the number of children and use the “name to face” feature on brightwheel to ensure all students are accounted for. Teachers will follow the “rule of three” when separating from the entire group to ensure ratios are upheld. The Director and Administrator Assistant are available to assist in classrooms to maintain appropriate ratios as well.

COMMUNICATING CONCERNS

If families have concerns relating to the care and supervision of their child, we encourage you to discuss with the teachers first to promote collaborative resolution of concerns. If after communicating with teachers, concerns are not resolved, please contact the Director. The Director will arrange a meeting with the teacher and parents to support the resolution process. If there is a question concerning policy, please communicate directly with the Director. If families have concerns that are not resolved with the Director, please communicate with the PCNS Board of Directors.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

PCNS teachers have completed coursework and training in early childhood development, assessment strategies and receive annual training and support for implementing the ASQ and developmental screening. Authentic developmental assessments are ongoing through the school year. PCNS teachers use reflective practices, anecdotal classroom observations and notes to assess each child in their classroom. These observations/assessments are shared with families during conferences through learning summaries, developmental checklists and through child portfolio documentation which includes photos or child created examples. Assessment information is kept confidential, only shared with families or anyone families have given written permission to share information with such as school districts or health professionals. In addition, this information is kept in the child's file at PCNS and will be shared with teachers as the child progresses through our program.

ASQ - AGES AND STAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

The Ages and Stages Developmental Screening (ASQ) is a valid and reliable screening tool PCNS uses to pinpoint children’s developmental progress. The ASQ-3 focuses on general development including communication, motor, cognitive and personal-social, and the ASQ SE2 focuses on Social Emotional Development. ASQs are completed by families twice a year; once in fall, and again in spring and allows teachers to receive information of a child’s development from the families point of view. In addition to ongoing classroom observations and assessment, ASQs support teachers to individualize lesson plans to ensure we are meeting the developmental needs of every child in our program. Access to the online ASQ portal will be provided prior to the start of the school year and ASQ results are shared with families during conferences.

Sometimes ASQs will indicate additional developmental evaluations are recommended for children. When this occurs, families, teachers and the director will discuss and develop a support plan together. Some supports could be, adaptation and accommodation in the classroom or PCNS

program, additional activities to practice at home, or referral for further evaluation. Please contact your Teacher and The Director if you ever have concerns about your child's development. We are here to support every family at PCNS.

DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE PROCEDURES

PCNS views each child as unique individuals and strives to set up each child for success by creating a classroom environment where children can trust they are safe to explore and practice new behaviors and skills. The word "discipline," translated from Latin, means "to learn." Discipline is the continual process of helping a child develop self control and learn new skills and behaviors supported by teachers utilizing a variety of positive guidance techniques. *Our goal is to set a foundation of respect, kindness and social understanding to support children as they grow older. In addition, PCNS goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures.* (This policy complies with federal and state civil right laws.)

In working with children, teachers will never use demeaning or abusive language, corporal punishment, humiliation or shaming tactics, threatening to withhold a snack, or punishment for toileting accidents. Teachers utilize positive guidance techniques with classroom expectations and limits are expected to be enforced in a consistent, clear, calm, and kind manner. Positive guidance techniques the teachers use may involve:

- Setting and communicating clear, consistent and fair expectations for classroom behavior with children
- Posting classroom expectations using both visual picture cues and print labels, phrased in positive guidance language such as: we use our walking feet, inside voices, gentle handles, kind words etc, and are referred to regularly
- Focusing on child's actions and behaviors rather than personality
- Redirecting the child with a positive statement to an appropriate alternative activity
- Providing supportive problem-solving language and strategies that a child may use to communicate how they are feeling and wanting to express in resolving a conflict with a peer
- Comforting a child until they regain composure
- Accompanying the child to a quieter area to do an activity together until the child is ready to return to appropriate play with their classmates

When a child is exhibiting a challenging behavior that (1) interferes with children's learning, development and success at play, (2) is harmful to the child, other children, or adults, or (3) puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure a behavior support plan will be enacted. Examples of challenging behavior include physical aggression (hitting, biting, shoving, whacking with toys), relational aggression (purposeful exclusion), verbal bullying, tantrums, whining, testing limits, refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

Should a child need additional guidance through a behavior support plan, teachers will contact the Director for assistance. With the Director, teachers will be supported to

1. Observe and assess the function of the behavior
2. Strategize positive appropriate support options with the intent to retain child in our program
3. Collaborate with families to develop an individualized support plan for the child
4. Make additional referrals for further evaluation if appropriate

PCNS is committed to providing quality early childhood education to every child. If after all documented evidence, supportive processes and procedures outlined above have been

implemented, and with enough time for a child to develop new strategies and skills has passed, a child is not thriving in PCNS and transition to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child, only then will disenrollment be a consideration. If exclusionary measures must be taken, PCNS will assist the family with accessing services and alternative placement.

PCNS COMMUNITY CONNECTION

At Pilgrim Community Nursery School, we take the word “Community” very seriously. We are committed to partnering with families to provide a welcoming and loving educational environment for our children.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

We use a variety of communication methods to keep families connected to PCNS happenings. To respect and honor our environment, most of our communications are digital. Sometimes printed materials will be sent home: please check your child’s backpack daily!

Our primary communication method is through brightwheel, where families can message teachers and administrators and classroom updates are posted including photos. In addition, teachers will send families a weekly newsletter via brightwheel or email to families highlighting the activities and events for the classroom and a glimpse into the upcoming week. Families will also be contacted individually via brightwheel messaging, phone or email by teachers or administration for any personalized conversations.

The Director emails a monthly Family Newsletter to all families the first Friday of each month which will include PCNS programmatic updates and events, Pilgrim Congregational Church information and local community partnership information that may be of interest to families. Occasionally we will provide updates on our social media accounts as well.

PCNS SCHOOL DIRECTORY

We publish an annual school wide directory which includes children’s name and household address, parent’s names, emails and phone numbers. Families may elect what information is included in the directory, or opt out of any information being included during the Permissions Form process at the beginning of every school year.

HOME VISITS

To support a smooth transition to a new school year, teachers will schedule a time to visit with families at your home or another mutually agreed upon location. These short Home Visits allow children to meet their teacher(s) in their natural environment, and begin the important step of relationship building. Home Visits will be scheduled in the last two weeks of August, prior to Welcome Night.

MORNING MINGLES

Once a month, 8:30 to 9:15 AM, families are invited for an informal Morning Mingle with each other and the PCNS Director and Administrator Assistant. Coffee will be provided.

HOLIDAYS

The PCNS teachers will incorporate holidays in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for their given class including but not limited to a story, song, craft, or food related to holidays or ask families to come in and share their family customs and traditions. Our main mission will be to provide an environment that follows the normal classroom routine as much as possible while honoring holidays and traditions.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We view the family to school relationship as being the cornerstone for a successful experience for children in our school. We encourage families to contact teachers at any time during the year to discuss how their child is doing at Pilgrim. In addition, we hold parent-teacher conferences twice a year: once in Fall, once in Spring. These conferences provide excellent opportunities to talk to the teachers about your child and their experiences at our school. Because of the nature of the conferences, we ask that children not be present. Consequently, school will not be in session on those days and we request families to arrange for childcare during conference times.

DUAL LANGUAGE HOUSEHOLDS

PCNS strives to hire staff which reflect the diversity of Oak Park and our surrounding communities, including those who speak the same languages of the children we serve. When more than one language is spoken at home, we will partner with families to support home languages in our program to the best of our ability. This may include collaborating with families and volunteers to identify and translate frequently used words and phrases used in the classroom setting for teacher and classmate use including printed materials such as classroom labeling, books or written materials.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PCNS has an open door policy and families are welcome to visit the school or your child's classroom at any time. Teachers welcome classroom volunteers and plan involvement opportunities throughout the school year. In addition, families are encouraged to attend PCNS community events.

PTO

The PTO assists PCNS Administration in planning community events for the school. We welcome all teachers and family member's ideas for events that will enhance the joy and connection throughout our school community. Please contact the Director for more information or with your exciting ideas!

BOARD MEMBERS

Pilgrim is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of PCNS Director, Teachers and Parents, Pilgrim Congregational Church members and community members. The board convenes monthly, and concentrates on the oversight and administrative guidance of our school. This is a great opportunity to help our Pilgrim Community! All parents are eligible to serve on the PCNS Board, no special skills are necessary other than a desire to be involved in your child's education and help the school reach its goals. Board member terms are October to September of the following year, there are no restrictions on the number of terms served.

FUNDRAISING COMMITMENTS

In order to maintain a high-quality early childhood program, we supplement our operating budget with fundraisers throughout the year. Our goal is to build community while also raising funds, and we invite you to join us at these activities and events **as you are able**. Fundraisers include Dining Days at local restaurants, Flower Power Fundraising in the fall and spring and three community fundraiser volunteer events:

Farmer's Market Donut Day is our largest fundraiser of the year and its success is dependent on family participation! A sign up for volunteer spots will be released before each Donut Day and we expect at least one (1) adult per family to sign up for a volunteer spot on Donut Day.

PCNS Cookie Walk & Holiday Artisan Market is held in early December as a festive kick off to the holiday season. Families support this event both by attending the event and by providing cookies and individual baked goods to be boxed and sold to attendees.

PCNS Parent's Night Out is held in the spring and is an opportunity for parents to connect and have fun together in our surrounding community. Nights out could be small or large events including bingo nights, bowling, game nights, galas the ideas are endless! PNO raises funds through donated raffle items, 50/50 and silent auctions.

FAMILY SURVEY

We invite every family to fill out a school survey twice a year to provide reflection on your experience with PCNS so far and information to guide our future planning. Survey results will be shared with PCNS board, staff and family members, removing any identifying information.

FISCAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

All tuition and fees are payable through brightwheel. Within the annual enrollment paperwork packet, families receive and agree to the PCNS Tuition Agreement which outlines obligations for payment of tuition and fees. Tuition is due on the first of the month (September- May), a monthly invoice will be sent via brightwheel 5 days prior to the due date. If you choose auto-pay your invoice will be automatically paid via brightwheel on the first of every month September - May. A \$25 late fee will be charged upon any tuition payment received after **the 10th of the month in which it is due**. Families select a preferred payment option of either a credit card (processing fees apply) or ACH upon enrollment. We request families to also sign up for auto-pay, as this will ensure monthly payments are made on time. If families need to split tuition payments between two authorized payees, please contact The Administrative Assistant at office@pilgrimschool.net to set up the correct tuition distribution for your family.

We do not prorate tuition throughout the school year for any reason. Should you experience financial difficulties through the school year, or need to withdraw for any reason, please contact the Director to discuss tuition assistance options or procedures to disenroll from the program if needed.

Tuition for the 2023/2024 school year is as follows:

Registration fee: \$100 (non-refundable)

Materials & Technology fee \$150 (non-refundable)

	<u>Annually</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
Two year old (2 days)	\$2700	\$300/month
Two year old (3 days)	\$4050	\$450/month
Two year old (5 days)	\$6750	\$750/month
3 hour AM program (4 days)	\$4500	\$500/month
3 hour Am program (5 days)	\$5625	\$625/month
4 hour AM program (5 days)	\$6390	\$710/month
Early Start and/or Late End	(rates are per session)	
2 Days a week	\$675	\$75/month
3 Days a week	\$1035	\$115/month
4 Days a week	\$1350	\$150/month
5 Days a week	\$1710	\$190/month

CREDIT CARD CONVENIENCE FEES

If you choose to pay by credit card you will be responsible for the 2.9% processing fee that is automatically accessed through brightwheel.

SCHOLARSHIP

Tuition assistance is available in the form of a partial scholarship and is held confidential. Scholarships are determined on a first-come basis, with decisions made prior to the start of the school year. Please contact PCNS Director for more information and to apply for a scholarship if needed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children at Pilgrim Community Nursery School. Families are encouraged to talk with Teachers and the Director regarding any individualized health and safety needs for your child.

MANDATED REPORTER

The State of Illinois requires that all staff of childcare agencies be alert for signs of child abuse and neglect. All staff are mandated to report suspected cases of abuse to DCFS Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25A-BUSE) without prior notification of the parent/guardian.

CPR AND FIRST AID

The State of Illinois requires all staff of childcare agencies to be up to date on certification of CPR and First Aid with AED training. We have AED available on school premises at all times.

REGULATORY HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS

PCNS undergoes yearly inspections by DCFS, The Oak Park Public Health Department and Oak Park Fire Department.

PESTICIDE POLICY

In accordance with Public Act 93-0381 we thoroughly assess the classrooms for pests on the first Friday of the month. PCNS uses non-toxic pest management techniques inside and outside of the facility whenever possible to control pests. A written copy of the pest management system is available in the office upon request.

RADON TESTING

In accordance with Illinois law, all licensed day care centers, day care homes, and group day care homes shall have the facility tested for radon at least once every three years. We are in compliance with the Illinois Child Care Act, testing records are kept in the office and available upon request.

NOTICE OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS

PCNS Director reviews the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) product recall listing <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls> on a monthly basis, the last Friday of each month, sharing relevant recall information with families and staff via the monthly newsletter published the first Friday of every month.

EMERGENCY SAFETY DRILLS

Fire Safety Drills are conducted monthly, Severe Weather and Unauthorized Access Drills are conducted 2 times a year each. We perform all safety drills as an entire school in a developmentally appropriate manner which will prepare children for an emergency situation without undue fear or stress. A written record is kept in the office and available upon request.

BUILDING ACCESS

The entrances of our building are locked at all times during school hours. The PCNS entrance on the side of the building is open and monitored by staff during drop off and pickup times. Visitors are to use the main Pilgrim Church entrance facing Lake Street.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All families are required to have an updated Emergency Information Form on file providing contact information in the event of an emergency during school hours. The form is completed through the brightwheel admissions process paperwork.

For minor accidents, we can only administer ice, band-aids, or cold compresses. Staff will complete an incident report, providing one copy for families, and one to be kept in the child's folder. Teachers may call families afterwards to check on the child and answer any additional questions.

For more severe accidents, the parents or emergency contact person will be notified and arrangements will be made to transport the child either home or to the hospital depending on level of severity.

SCHOOL CLOSING

In the event of severe weather conditions closing OP District 97, PCNS will also close. The Director will notify families via email of the closing ASAP via brightwheel messaging. Families may also find emergency closing information through OP District 97 website: www.OP97.org or through local news organizations:

Channel 2 WBBM-TV	Channel 5 WMAQ-TV	Channel 7 WLS-TV	Channel 9
WGN TV	Channel 32 WFLD TV	WGN-AM (720)	WBBM-AM (780)

If Pilgrim needs to be closed because of bad weather (but District 97 is open) or we have a building equipment difficulty, parents will be notified by PCNS staff as soon as possible via brightwheel messaging and phone calls. Parents and caregivers are asked to put the school phone number 708-848-5869 into their cell phones to ensure communication is received.

HEALTH RECORDS POLICY

PCNS requires and maintains health records for each child. Records on file include:

- [IDPH Certificate of Child Health Examination](#)
- Emergency contact form updated at a minimum annually
- Additional individual health forms as needed including medication plan, asthma plan, seizure plan, allergy plan or others.

All child health and safety records are confidential but is immediately available upon request to

- Administrators and educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

[IDPH Certificate of Child Health Examination](#) must be completed prior to the first day of school attendance, with a 6-week grace period. Completed health forms must document that the child is up to date with all age-appropriate routine screening and immunizations as published by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Centers for Disease Control of the United States Public Health

Service (CDC-USPHS) and the Academy of Family Practice (AFP). **Proof of all AAP and CDC recommended immunizations is required.** If a child is overdue for any of these measures, the parent or guardian must show evidence of an appointment in the near future for those services as a condition for remaining enrolled. If these conditions are not met your child will be excluded from the program until they are up to date on required immunizations. In addition Health History (pg 2) must be completed and signed by parent or guardian.

REPORTING ILLNESS

As containment is key to reducing the spread of all viruses including COVID-19 and to prevent potential classroom closures, we ask, if your child is sick please stay home. Children who have a fever, are vomiting or have diarrhea any time within 24 hours before a school day, are required to stay home. Children and staff who are sick are required to stay home at a minimum until:

1. They are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines AND
2. All other symptoms have improved AND
3. Those experiencing symptoms of Covid19 including fever, headache, new cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea must also have a negative Covid-19 test in order to attend school OR a doctor's note confirming a different diagnosis for illness.

If your child is ill, has been exposed to or diagnosed with a communicable or highly contagious disease, **you must notify the Director via email: emily.norman@pilgrimschool.net** (1) describing symptoms (2) date symptoms began (3) results of diagnostic testing or diagnosis from health professional if applicable. The following illnesses are some of the highly contagious diseases that will require additional communication to families and staff, and authorization to return to school:

Covid-19,	Chicken Pox	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	Fifth Disease	Head Lice
Hand, Foot	Mouth Disease	Impetigo	Influenza	Measles
Mumps	Ringworm	RSV	Scarlet Fever	Strep Throat

When notified of a highly contagious disease in our school, Teachers and the Director will communicate any information including informational materials and guidance to families as soon as possible, with confidentiality for afflicted children or staff members upheld.

ILLNESS AT PILGRIM

If your child becomes sick while at school, we will notify you immediately and ask that you come for him/her as quickly as possible. Sick children will stay with the Director or Administrative Assistant in the office until a parent/caregiver can come to pick up the child.

We will call you and ask you to pick up your child if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rash
- Discharge from nose, ears or eyes
- If the child seems very uncomfortable, lethargic or complains of headache, stomach-ache, sore throat, or earache

If a child is sent home from school with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, we require they be kept home for **24 hours** after the temperature has broken without use of medication, and vomiting or diarrhea has stopped.

COVID 19 POLICY AND PROCEDURE (May 2023)

Any COVID-19 close contact exposure, suspected case or positive case must be reported to the Director immediately to begin further mitigation processes. PCNS closely follows current Oak Park Health Department Guidelines for Daycares and must at a minimum comply with current regulations. Any child or staff member in close contact exposure to COVID-19, suspected of having COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID-19 will be excluded from PCNS for a duration of time following Oak Park Health Department Guidance.

PCNS reserves the right to implement additional mitigations to ensure the utmost health and safety for our staff, children and families within our PCNS community. PCNS mitigations in place include reduced class sizes to support social distancing, intentional spacing for snacks as masks are removed, air purifiers in our classrooms, additional ventilation including opening windows in the classroom when possible.

For specific COVID-19 Policy and Guidance for isolation periods and return to PCNS requirements following close contacts, symptomatic and/or positive COVID-19 cases, please see PCNS [COVID-19 Protocols](#) on our website which includes our most up to date information. As COVID-19 continues to evolve, any changes to this policy and procedure will be shared with PCNS families and staff in a timely fashion by the Director

MEDICATION POLICY

All PCNS staff have completed First Aid Training which includes delivery of emergency medications such as epinephrine, **school staff will dispense prescribed emergency medication only**. If your child uses prescribe emergency medication, families must also

1. Complete the Medication Consent and Release form annually
2. Provide non-expired medication in original packaging with administration instructions attached.

Medications will be kept in a locked medical bag within the classroom emergency backpack which is with the class at all times. Medication will be returned to families for replenishing if expired, and returned at the end of the school year. For all non-emergency prescription medications, we request medication administration scheduling to be made during times when the child is most likely to be under parental supervision. If this is not feasible, parents may be requested to come to class to give their child non-emergency medication. Staff can not administer non-prescription medication.

Welcome to Pilgrim Community Nursery School!

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2023**Important Dates 23/24**

August 21st-August 29th	Home Visits	Morning Mingles 8:30 AM
August 30th	PCNS Welcome Night 5:30-6:30	September 11
September 4th	No School	October 3
September 5th & 6th	First Day of School*	November 6
September 25th	No School	December 5
September 30th	PCNS Donut Day	January 8
October 5th	Child's Night at School 5:30-6:30	February 6
October 4th & 5th	Picture Days	March 4
October 9th	No School	April 2
October 21st	Fall Family Fest (afternoon)	May 6
November 9th & 10th	Conferences, No School	
November 22nd-24th	Thanksgiving Break	
December 2nd	Cookie Walk & Artisan Market	
December 22nd -January 5th	Winter Break, No School	
January 15th	No School	
January 20th	Open House 10 am - 12	
February 9th	PCNS Family Event 5:30-7:30	
February 19th	No School	
March 18th & 19th	Conferences, No School	
March 25th-29th	Spring Break, No School	
April 4th	Child's Night at School 5:30-6:30	
April TBA	Parent Night Out	
May 24th	Last Day of School	
June 3rd - June 14th	Summer Camp Session 1	
June 17th - June 28th	Summer Camp Session 2	
July 1st - July 12th	Summer Camp Session 3	
July 15th- July 26th	Summer Camp Session 4	
July 29th-August 9th	Summer Camp Session 5	

*Abbreviated Schedule in 2-year old Classrooms September 5th & September 6th

2023/24 PCNS Calendar

September 2023						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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October 2023						
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29	30	31				

November 2023						
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December 2023						
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January 2024						
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28	29	30	31			

February 2024						
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March 2024						
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31						

April 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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May 2024						
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June 2024						
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July 2024						
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August 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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