

Pittsburgh Classical 6-8

1463 Chartiers Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15220 | Phone: 412.928.3110
Parent Hotline: 412.622.7920 | www.pps.k12.pa.us

Welcome!

Welcome to Pittsburgh Classical Academy. It is our mission to ensure that all of our children receive a wholesome education with a foundation of classical studies and an emphasis on technology, thus preparing them for the future. This education is provided in a safe and structured environment where respect, cultural awareness and excellence are our motivation.

I hope that you find this handbook to be a useful resource. It answers many of the questions that you may have about procedures at our school.

I ask you to please join us as partners in educating your child. Together we can help prepare your child for a successful future with limitless possibilities.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Valerie Merlo, Principal

SCHOOL COLORS AND MASCOT

Our own students selected our school colors of red, silver and blue, and our school mascot, the Knight.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Bell schedules were not available at the time these materials were printed. Please visit our website at www.pps.k12.pa.us or contact our Parent Hotline at 412.622.7920 for the bell schedule for your child's school.

Admission

Pittsburgh Classical 6-8 is a Magnet school. In order to apply, parents must fill out a magnet preference form which is included in the Offering and Options Guide mailed to all parents each fall. Please contact the school for more information.

Absences and Attendance

When a student is unable to attend school, the parent/guardian is advised to call in to inform the school of the absence. Calls should be made between 8:30-9:00 a.m. Please give the student's name, homeroom teacher's name, and reason for your child's absence. A written excuse must be given to the homeroom teacher upon the student's return. A student's absence will not be excused without a written excuse from a parent/guardian. Any absence after the tenth day in a school year will require a doctor's note.

In order to be eligible to receive passing grades for a report period, students must be in attendance at school at least 95 percent of the total number of scheduled student days for the report period. This means students who miss more than six days in a report period (excused or unexcused) are in danger of failing. Students are given the opportunity to make up work missed when absent. Successful completion of work missed during absences does not excuse the student from the 95 percent attendance requirement. Exceptions to the report period attendance standard include illness, quarantine, death in the immediate family, impassable roads, religious holidays, and principal-approved reasons. No make-up work will be given without a written, legal excuse for an absence. After ten absences in an academic year, each subsequent absence will only be excused with a doctor's note.

Absenteeism is disruptive in the process of a student's learning and unexcused absences for students of compulsory school age are unlawful. Please be aware that homework assignments are usually the culmination of a 45-minute lesson and an absent student has missed that period of instruction. Let us work together to encourage your child to keep up regular attendance and have a productive school year.

Tardiness

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes loss of instruction time. Any student who arrives at school after 9:05 a.m. is considered tardy. A note must accompany late students.

Cancellation of School

Cancellation of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The school board and administrators are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances.

Every practical means is used to notify parents of a cancellation, including radio, TV and newspapers. In the unusual circumstance where school must be canceled during the school day, teachers will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision before releasing them.

Evacuation of School

In the event of an evacuation emergency at our school building, the students would be moved to Langley High School.

Doctor and Dentist Appointments

Students are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentists appointments outside of school hours. When this is not possible, students will be excused for these special appointments. Do not make appointments on Wednesday if your child is a scholar. It is the responsibility of the student to get make-up work from all missed classes.

Make-up Work

Students or their parents are responsible for requesting make-up work immediately upon the student's return to school from an excused absence. If dates of a student's absence are known in advance, the teacher should be notified and planned assignments may be given. Make-up work will only be given for excused absences.

We are following strict attendance guidelines set by the state. In order to remain a school in good standing, we must keep a 95 percent attendance rate. Family vacations are not excused absences.

School Dress Code

- Shorts/skirts must come to the end of the finger tips. (Shoulders must be relaxed and arms held straight down at the side of body.)
- Shirts must have sleeves and must cover the chest and stomach. No bare stomachs, short shirts that cannot be tucked in, halters, tube tops, spaghetti strap, tank tops, wide-armed, or net t-shirts. No see-through clothing.

- No low slung pants. Pants are worn at the waist.
- No inappropriate slogans on shirts. No gang clothing.
- No coats or jackets in class.
- No bandanas, hats, sunglasses, or scarves are to be worn in the building.
- No flip-flop shoes. Shoes must have a back for safety reasons.
- No distracting or disruptive hairstyles.
- No sleepwear (pajamas, slippers)

Illness or Injury

In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a member of the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. Remember, an emergency telephone number where parents can be reached, and the name and telephone number of the student's family doctor must be on file at the school.

Medications

If a student must bring medications to school, the following requirements must be met.

Prescriptions and medications:

- Must be clearly identified as to the name and type of medication.
- Must carry a prescription label with the child's name, drug identity, dosage instructions, doctor's name, and prescription date. The prescription must be current.
- A note, dated and signed by the parent and doctor giving the child's name, dosage amounts, and specific dosage times must be provided.
- No medications (antacids, pain relievers, cough drops, etc.) are on hand or supplied by the school. Therefore, if your child is susceptible to upset stomach, headache or cramps, those medications need to be sent in following the above regulations.
- Medication must be left in the office and will be given by school personnel.

Announcements

There is an activity calendar which is sent home monthly, and that is also in the main office. Please check your child's book bag on the last day of each month for the new calendar.

Cafeteria Rules

The cafeteria is the heart of the school. A strong insistence on good conduct occurs in the cafeteria. The students eat with their homerooms in assigned seats and remain safe and calm. They have time to interact during recess.

Lunch Rules

- When the principal, assistant principal or teacher raises his/her hand - be quiet.
- No one eats until his/her table is called to line up.
- You must clean up your area and throw out your garbage when you are finished.
- Do not stand up.
- Do not talk loudly.
- Do not touch anyone.
- No running around.
- Sit at your assigned table in your assigned seat.

Food and Drinks

Food and drinks are not to be carried throughout the school. They are restricted to the cafeteria. Students are not permitted to chew gum in school.

Hands-off Policy

Our school has a "hands-off" policy to keep our students safe. The majority of fights in middle school begin because someone has touched, pushed, shoved, or 'playfully' poked someone else. For this reason we tell all students to keep their hands to themselves. We do not consider pushing, hitting, shoving, bumping, etc. to be playful. Students will be suspended for this type of behavior.

Playground Supervision

There is supervised recess during lunch. Lunchtime is very structured. The playground is not supervised after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal.

Loitering

Students should leave the school and school grounds promptly after classes or activities are dismissed. Students should not arrive at school before 8:40 a.m., and should leave promptly at 3:51 p.m. if they are not staying for an after-school activity. There will be no unnecessary 'hanging around' before or after school. Non-students are not permitted on campus at any time unless they have been registered as an official guest in the office.

Lost And Found

All clothing found on the campus, regardless of its value, is placed in the lost and found boxes in the office. Money, jewelry, or any other articles of value are turned into the office. Students may claim them after properly identifying the item.

Homework

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice and drills that reinforce classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking.

Homework assignment books are provided by the PTO as a way to help your middle school student stay organized. All students will be issued a homework binder from the school. Students will write all assignments in this binder for parent review. Please review and sign this daily.

Fundraising

Our school will be holding major fundraising campaigns. Selling will be voluntary and no minimum sales will be required. No personal checks will be accepted; cash or money order only. The building principal must approve classroom or club fundraising projects.

Lockers

Pittsburgh Classical acknowledges its respect for the privacy of the student attending the school and provides each student with the use of a locker. Students may store clothing, school materials, books and other personal property. Although each student is responsible for locking the assigned locker, all lockers are and shall remain the property of the school.

The student's use of a locker does not diminish the school's ownership or control of the locker. The school has the right to inspect the locker and its contents. This is necessary to insure that the lockers are being used in accordance with intended purpose and to eliminate fire or other hazards, maintain sanitary conditions, attempt to locate lost or stolen materials.

A locker is issued at the beginning of the school year. The school is not responsible for valuables left in the locker. Please get a lock! You must give the homeroom teacher a spare key or the combination. If valuables must be brought, please give them to the office.

Recess

Weather permitting, students are given recess at lunch. Decisions to have outside recess during cold weather depend upon the temperature and the wind chill factor. Shorter outside recess times are scheduled on cold days. Students should always dress for outside recess. All students must be on the playground during outside recess. Only students with medical excuses will be allowed to remain in the building during recess. Students will have supervised free time in the cafeteria on inclement days. Quiet games are allowed.

Student Services Staff

A developmental advisor is available to assist students with questions, career choices, academic and/or social problems, and crisis situations. She also provides mentoring and support to students.

Students are encouraged to make use of the developmental advisor when the need arises.

Substitute Teachers

A substitute teacher will periodically teach every student. The most common reason for using substitute teachers occurs when the regular teacher is ill. However, substitutes are also used when regular teachers are on leave for personal business, professional training, or family emergencies. Students are expected to be extra courteous to substitute teachers.

Any misconduct in the classroom will be dealt with immediately.

Telephone

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students, except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements. Please do not ask us to get a student out of class.

Study Skills

The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to class prepared with pencil, paper and other needed materials.
- Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
- Ask questions to clarify problems.
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
- Strive to do the very best work possible. Just 'getting by' is not a worthwhile goal.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Community of Caring

Community of Caring is our character education program. It means that we emphasize the importance of family, respect, responsibility, caring, and trust in all we do. Our discipline policy is directly connected to our Community of Caring program.

We also have a Community of Caring club. Students who belong to the club stay after school to work on charity and school improvement projects. They also mentor other students. This club is open to all students as long as they maintain satisfactory behavior and grades in all classes.

After-school Activities

A variety of after school activities will be provided. Information will be sent home about each activity and students may register for the one(s) of their choice. Permission slips are required for participation and a material or usage fee may be charged.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We want to increase the meaningful involvement of parents in the daily life of the children at Pittsburgh Classical. An adult needs ACT 33/34 clearance to work with children. Please contact the school early in the year if you plan to volunteer or chaperone. There is a turn-around time of about a month on clearances. We have funds available to pay for your clearance.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent conferences are encouraged and can be arranged at any time during the school year. These conferences are very valuable to the overall education program. Some parents are hesitant about participating in conferences, but our teachers can do a much better job with students if they can share their understanding of the student directly with the parents and the parents share their knowledge with the teacher. Please take advantage of our morning parent conference sessions on the fourth Thursday of each month.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Pittsburgh Classical tries to maintain a very involved PTO. All parents are urged to become members and to actively participate. Meetings will be held monthly starting in October after our Potluck Social in September. The PTO will sponsor several money-making projects. With the help of all parents, these projects can be very successful. They allow the PTO to fund many important activities at the school.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom. School discipline policies will be established and consistently enforced. When a student is having a problem, the teacher may conference with the student, conference with the parent, use classroom disciplinary procedures, or refer the situation directly to the principal. For more information, please refer to the Code of Student Conduct.

Each parent is to sign the discipline rules for Pittsburgh Classical 6-8. The rules are those designed by the Board of Education of Pittsburgh. The behavior expected from students at school is a combination of common courtesy and safety considerations.

At Pittsburgh Classical, we want to provide the best environment for all of our children to learn. This means that we want a structured and calm school so that every child has an opportunity to benefit from our excellent teachers and curriculum.

Please review these rules and possible consequences with your child. At Pittsburgh Classical 6-8, we do not permit:

- Disrespect/defiance (detention, in-school, suspension)
- Fighting (suspension)
- Hands on someone else, pushing, biting, hitting of any kind, horseplay (in-school, suspension)
- Destruction of school property/destruction of anyone's property (in-school, suspension)
- Derogatory/racial/ethnic/sexual remarks and or clothing slogans (in-school, suspension)
- Weapons (all guns—toy guns can be dangerous!) (expulsion)
- Alcohol/narcotics/cigarettes (suspension - possible expulsion)
- Disturbing a class (writing assignment, detention, in-school)
- Cutting a class, roaming halls (in-school, suspension)
- Refusing to work in class (writing assignment, detention, in-school)
- Loud talk, shouting in the halls and cafeteria (writing assignment, detention, in-school)
- Running in the halls and cafeteria (writing assignment, detention, in-school)
- Profanity – children cannot spell it, say versions of it, etc. (in-school, suspension)

- Cheating/copying (in-school, suspension, failing grade)
- No throwing objects (in-school, suspension)
- Dress code violations (in-school, suspension)
- Electronic equipment (confiscated and returned only to parent)
- Violation of cell phone policy (in-school, suspension and phone returned to parent)
- Threats (suspension, possible expulsion)
- Bullying (suspension)
- Inappropriate personal contact (suspension)
- Dishonesty/Lying (detention, in-school, suspension)
- Repeated violations of any of the above (suspension) (possible removal from program)

The counselor and team leaders assist the principal with all discipline. We as a school work together and have consistent consequences for behaviors. Therefore, no mixed messages are sent out. School and home must work together.

Lunch Detention

Lunch detention can be assigned to students for minor infractions of school policy, including, but not limited to: repeated gum chewing, running in halls, talking after being warned, minor disruptions of class, etc. A student who is assigned lunch detention will be notified by the teacher. The teacher will also contact the parent by phone or mail to notify them of the situation. On the assigned detention day, the student will report to the detention room, with his/her lunch (no snacks allowed) and will be required to eat quietly and work on a writing assignment.

A student who refuses to serve the lunch detention or does not follow the rules during lunch detention will be assigned to an in-school suspension the following day.

In-School Suspensions

In-school suspension can be assigned to students as a consequence for violating the school code of conduct. When students are assigned to the in-school room, parents will receive a phone call or a written notice from the assigning teacher or from the principal. Students are expected to complete all assignments and follow all rules in the in-school room. Students who violate rules in the in-school room will receive a warning for a first offense, a phone call for a second offense and a suspension for a third offense.

Suspensions

Suspensions from school are given by the principal for the very worst infractions of school rules and policy. Suspensions are given only as a last resort. It signifies that the student's behavior has been so disruptive or a threat to safety that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the student from the school environment.

We do expect support from the parent by ensuring that a suspension day is not a 'fun day' for the student. If the rules are consistently enforced and supported at home, then we minimize the chances for repeat violations.

