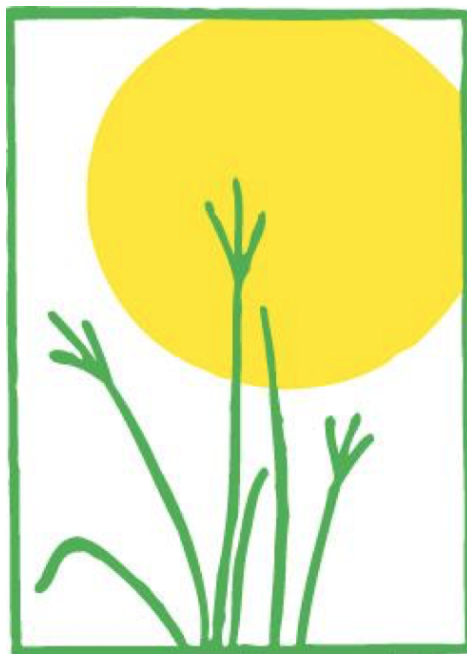


PRAIRIE HILL

Learning Center

PARENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027



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Roca, NE 68430

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PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center

is a nonprofit education corporation founded for the purpose of offering Montessori education for children with an emphasis on meeting the individual and communal developmental needs of each child in a historic indoor and country outdoor environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center's mission is to offer education in an atmosphere that promotes individual growth as well as caring for others and the Earth.

Welcome to PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center! We hope that this handbook provides you with helpful and necessary information that will guide you and your child's experience at PRAIRIE HILL into a continuous journey of growing, learning, and understanding.

PHLC 2026-27 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Aug. 5-10	Staff Inservice
Aug. 11	YCC/Primary in session, First Day for YE new students
Aug. 13	First Day for all Elementary and Adolescent students
Aug. 25-28	School Pictures
Sept. 7	NO SCHOOL
Sept. 8	Staff Inservice-NO SCHOOL
Oct. 3	Little Run on the Prairie/Children's Country Fair
Oct. 15	School Conferences-NO SCHOOL
Oct. 16-19	Fall Break-NO SCHOOL
Nov. 25-27	Thanksgiving Break-NO SCHOOL
Nov. 30	Staff Inservice-NO SCHOOL
Dec. 23-Jan.4	Winter Break-NO SCHOOL
Jan. 5	Classes Resume
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-NO SCHOOL
Feb. 15	Presidents' Day- NO SCHOOL
Mar 8-12	Spring Break NO SCHOOL
Apr. 5	School Conferences-NO SCHOOL
Apr. 6	Staff Inservice-NO SCHOOL
May 20	Last Day of School/8th Year Graduation
May 21	Staff Inservice-NO SCHOOL
May 24-31	NO SCHOOL
June 1	YCC/Primary resume, Summer Camp begins
July 2-6	NO SCHOOL
July 30	NO SCHOOL

Board of Directors

A volunteer Board of Directors composed of staff, parents, and other interested individuals from the broader community govern the school. The Board asks that parents consider volunteering to support the Prairie Hill community. Volunteer opportunities include helping organize the Children's Country Fair, Little Run on the Prairie, and Gifts & Talents Auction as well as feeding animals on weekends and holidays, landscaping and lawn mowing, and work days throughout the year.

Working committees include:

1. Parent Liaison/Special Events
 - a. Coordinates Parent Partners
 - b. Plans fundraisers: Children's Country Fair, Gifts and Talents Auction
2. Finance
 - a. Plans annual budget
 - b. Reviews insurance policies
 - c. Reviews special financial situations
3. Educational Programs Committee (for Montessori and certified, lead staff)
 - a. Plans all school events
 - b. Determines enrollment and admissions
 - c. Develops indoor and outdoor environments in keeping with Montessori pedagogy

PRAIRIE HILL PROMISE

A Parent's Promise

As I decide to enroll my child at PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center,
I acknowledge and accept these responsibilities:

- *I will read the Parent Handbook.*
- *I will meet with my child's Montessori Guide for individual conferences, parent education meetings, and classroom observations as scheduled.*
- *I will support the school's community events and the Spring and Fall Workdays.*
- *I will support the two annual fundraising events: the Children's Country Fair and the Gifts and Talents Auction.*
- *I will contact my child's Montessori Guide whenever I have questions about the activities or relationships in which my child is involved.*

PRAIRIE HILL's Promise

As your child is accepted into the PRAIRIE HILL Community,
we acknowledge and accept these responsibilities:

- *We will take note of the special comments on your enrollment application.*
- *We will keep a record of your child's progress through the materials and we will strive to offer timely lessons that meet your child's developmental needs.*
- *We will strive to strengthen our parent-guide relationship by offering individual parent-guide conferences.*
- *We will do our best to accommodate any special physical need your child may exhibit, keeping in mind every child's natural urge for growing independence.*
- *We will contact you as soon as possible regarding any unusual physical or psychological need exhibited by your child.*

LEARNING PROGRAMS AT PRAIRIE HILL

YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY Ages 1 ½ - 3	Young children develop the following skills through individual and communal daily living activities. • ACTIVITIES ○ toileting & dressing ○ food preparation & eating ○ plant care & animal care • SKILLS ○ Independence ○ Coordination ○ Organization ○ Concentration Sensorial and language skills encompassed within all areas of learning also assist the children in gaining independence.
PRIMARY COMMUNITY Ages 3 – 6	This program offers continued individual and communal opportunities, and sensorial and language experiences for children through daily living activities in a broader environment with more choices: • Fine arts • Geography • Math • Sciences • Geometry • History The primary community involves a greater number of members working together. Because children develop in their ability to grasp abstract concepts, writing and reading skills become necessary.
ELEMENTARY & ADOLESCENT COMMUNITY Ages 6 years – 8 th grade	This fully state-accredited program is designed to nourish students' natural curiosity about the whole universe. Learning evolves through individual interest and small group explorations in every subject area, promoting the child's desires for knowledge about his/her cultural, social, and physical environment, and introduces the child to the greater society beyond the classroom walls by means of "going-outs". • Integrated subject areas • Biological exploration in natural setting • Hands-on exploration of concepts in the areas of science, geography, geometry, and math • A gratitude of the work of the order of the universe and the accomplishments of the "unknown persons" through the study of the origin of the universe and pre-history

ARRIVALS

EARLY EXTENDED DAY ARRIVALS *Arrival time is between 7:30-7:45 a.m. if your child is having breakfast*

- Please park your car and walk your child into the Farmhouse or Prairie House.
- Do not leave until an adult is aware of your child's arrival.
- Hand medication and permission slips or any written messages to a staff person, trying not to disrupt the ongoing activities of both the children and staff.

REGULAR CLASS DAY ARRIVALS *Arrival time is 8:20-8:40 a.m. for YCC and Farm House,*

8:20 - 8:30 for Meadow House, Prairie House, Elementary, and Adolescent Communities

Please do not park. There is a lot of traffic at this time, and parking along the driveway blocks and holds up the flow of movement. If your student is in the YCC or Primary communities, please stay in your vehicle and wait for a staff person to greet you. We will make every effort to limit our conversations with parents at this time to keep the movement flowing. If there is unusual information to communicate, please prepare a note ahead of time to hand to us. We will respond as soon as possible.

If your student is in the Meadow House, Prairie House, or EH, please pull along the sidewalk up to the flagpole and drop your student off. The student may go directly into the EH.

Families with children going to multiple buildings: please stop at the Earth House flagpole first, then drive around and stop at the Prairie House bench, and then again at the Farm House drop off. All children need to be dressed for the weather (snow pants, boots, mittens, hats) when they arrive. Shoes may be carried in PRAIRIE HILL bags.

- Please drive around the orchard counter-clockwise and stop at the sidewalk so that your child can step right into the walkway when a staff person opens the door.
- Hand to the staff person any written messages for staff personnel or medications with the appropriate completed signed medication permission slip.
- In the YCC and Primary, a staff person will accompany your child to the school door, thus allowing for short, but pleasant goodbyes, plus decongested, safe, and calm entrances into the school. Earth House students walk directly into the building. Adults are awaiting their arrival.

LATE ARRIVAL *8:40 a.m. or later*

For the YCC, please walk your child to the porch by the YCC and say goodbye outside. For the FH, please walk to the west door and knock, if no adult sees you, and say goodbye on the porch. For the EH, please drop off your child at the EH door and monitor your child's entrance into the building.

DEPARTURES

HALF DAY STUDENT DEPARTURES *12:00-12:10 p.m.*

YOUNG CHILDREN: Please stop your vehicle by the sidewalk near the Prairie House. Stay in your car while a staff person walks out with your child and helps him or her get into your vehicle.

PRIMARY: Pull up to the rocked area by the side of the Farm House. Stay in your car while a staff person walks out with your child and helps him or her get into your vehicle. Please move forward to buckle your child in.

REGULAR CLASS DAY DEPARTURES *4:00-4:10 p.m.*

YOUNG CHILDREN: Please park in the YCC designated spots by the Farm House. The children will be waiting with a staff member on the bench by the parking lot.

FARMHOUSE: Pull up to the rocked area by the side of the Farm House. Stay in your car while a staff person walks out with your child and helps him or her get into your vehicle. Please move forward to buckle your child in.

PRAIRIE HOUSE/ELEMENTARY/ADOLESCENT: As traffic allows, please pull up to the sidewalk near the Earth House. Stay to the right and in line. Stay in your car. Your child will be dismissed accordingly.

EXTENDED DAY *Departure time from 4:00-5:30 p.m.*

- Please park your car and come to get your own child in the Earth House
- Do not leave until you see that a staff person is fully aware of your child's departure
- Make sure that your child has everything that must be taken home: PRAIRIE HILL bag, boots, and all outerwear

PICK-UP OF STUDENTS

- You must contact PRAIRIE HILL by phone or written message in advance, if your child will be departing earlier or later than the agreed-upon departure time, so that we can always provide the necessary number of staff. ***The student will be waiting in the main office for pick up unless decided otherwise by their guide.
- Parents must send written notice (at least the morning of) before we can give permission to some other person not indicated on the child's record in our files to pick up your child from PRAIRIE HILL. This notice must include a description of the vehicle as well. **Without this written notice, we cannot legally release your child to anyone other than those indicated on your records.**

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance Policy for School Age Children (K- 8th grade): PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center is approved through Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and complies with the requirements of **NDE Rule 14. As stated in this rule, school age students up to 8th grade are required to attend school for a minimum of 1032 hours.** To meet NDE requirements, school age children (Kindergarten and older) must be present for the whole school day and must arrive at the start of the established school day. Attendance and tardiness is recorded in each community to ensure attendance compliance. In some cases, absences may be excused, but still may factor into the tallies warranting a review of a student's attendance. While non-school age children (students under Kindergarten age) are not subject to these requirements, PHLC is a place where we all come to learn, so we promote school best practices for every child (ages 18 mos - 8th grade). Therefore, we ask that you align extracurricular and travel plans with our scheduled school closings as much as possible.

What happens if my school-age child exceeds the number of allowable absences or tardies?

You will be notified when the number of absences or tardies become concerning. After 15 absences, the family will be given written notice and required to attend a conference to review the attendance policy and develop an attendance improvement plan. After 20 absences, either excused or unexcused, the school will review the causes of absenteeism. If it is determined that failure to adhere to the attendance improvement plan is the result of the parents' inability to control the child's attendance or failure to comply with the state's compulsory attendance laws, a report will be made to NDE's Student Services Division, which will determine further action. Please note that excess absenteeism and tardiness may result in your child being unable to pass to the next grade level. While this may not affect classroom placement at PHLC due to our mixed age groupings, it would impact the child's placement at the time of matriculation to another school.

Affiliation with Norris Public School District

PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center is within the Norris School District and under the supervision of the Norris superintendent, allowing PRAIRIE HILL staff to access and collaborate with general education resources, school psychologists/special education services, and resource officers.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

The students in grades 3rd through 8th participate in the MAP Growth testing in the fall and spring. Students that might need additional testing may be assigned to take the MAP Reading Fluency test.

All testing is for the purpose of informing instruction, to assess student strengths and weaknesses, and to create an appropriate instructional plan for students. MAP scores are also recognized by the public school system which makes transition of records to new schools easier to understand. You can find out more about MAP testing at www.nwea.org.

STUDENT HEALTH POLICIES

Illness and Medications

Medications

Any medications, both prescription and non-prescription, to be given to a child at PRAIRIE HILL during hours of operation, **must** be handed directly to office staff or the adults in the student's community, in the original container, clearly labeled for the named child and **must** be accompanied by a completed, signed PRAIRIE HILL medication permission slip. **Medications cannot be legally administered without the completed and signed form.** You may pick up extra forms from the office or your child's community.

Illness Exclusion from School

Parents must **notify the Center immediately of any contagious disease** the child might contract, so that we can notify the other parents and the State Health Department if needed.

We cannot admit your child to school if one or more of the following exists:

- They have vomited 2 or more times in the past 24 hours.
- They have a rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician has determined the illness is not contagious.
- They have chicken pox (varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted.
- They have impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- They have mouth sores with drooling.
- They have head lice or ringworm until after the first treatment.
- They have diarrhea (especially if it regards diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper, and toilet trained children whose stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal on that day).
- They have a fever about 100 degrees F axillary (armpit) or 101 degrees F orally and behavior change or other illness symptoms (e.g. sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- They require more care than can be given by staff in a group setting or a child who is unable to participate in regular daily activities.

Please communicate with us if your child is absent from PRAIRIE HILL for any reason, but it is even more important to let us know if your child is staying home with a contagious illness so that we can notify the other parents and the State Health Department (if necessary).

Immunizations

Nebraska Law requires that students be protected against Polio, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B, and Varicella (chicken pox). Any student who is not in compliance with immunization requirements, or does not have a waiver on file, will not be permitted to continue in school until the student is in compliance.

Immunization records or waiver must be received prior to enrollment and updated by request. In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease, un-immunized students may be excluded from school. No tuition adjustment will be made for these absences.

Illness Not Requiring Exclusion

At PRAIRIE HILL, facial tissues are supplied. Children with colds or coughs should wear clothing with pockets, so a clean tissue can always be handy. We teach children to cough into their elbow or a tissue (then throw the tissue away). We encourage frequent hand washing as well (20-30 seconds of scrubbing). Our staff are trained in daily health checks to identify signs of illness, and work and eating surfaces are sanitized several times daily.

COVID Policy

Prairie Hill's COVID policy is located on the school website, www.prairiehill.com.

**Please let us know when there is a change of your child's health / medical status or emergency contact information, so that we can update our records as soon as possible.*

Incidents/Accidents

Incident Reporting

Incidents are defined as any deliberate action that results in physical or emotional injury or that compromises the physical safety of the children and adults in the environment. Incidents can be caused by, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: physical or verbal abuse, sexually inappropriate behavior, profanity, irrational, unreasonable or disrespectful behavior, and possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs or a weapon. Law enforcement and/or DHHS might be contacted depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

Any incident, as defined in this policy that requires the intervention of a staff or notification of a parent will be recorded on an Incident Report Form. The staff witnessing the incident or being reported to about the incident (by children, etc.) will fill out an Incident Report Form and sign it. The report will be shared with the parent(s) by the end of day. The receipt of the report will need to be acknowledged by the parent(s) within 24 hours either by signature on the original report or as a reply to an email containing a scanned copy of the report. Depending on the severity of the incident, the parent(s) may be contacted by the witnessing staff, Montessori Guide, or Administration prior to the report form being shared.

Parents reporting incidents to staff are asked to email the Montessori Guide and copy Administration. Incidents will be followed up taking the outlined steps.

Staff will not communicate names of children involved other than the child whose parent(s) will receive the report. Separate reports will be written for each child involved. Reports will not refer to any child other than the child for whom the report is written, as child A and child B, etc.

Accident Reporting

If a child is involved in an accident at PRAIRIE HILL, first aid procedures will be followed.

If an accident may require the child(ren) to be taken to a doctor or hospital, the injury is very visible, or the child(ren) remains upset for an extended period of time, parents are notified immediately. Any accident that requires any form of first aid, including an unusual amount of comforting for that child, will be recorded. The report will be shared with the parent(s) by the end of day. The receipt of the report will need to be acknowledged by the parent(s) within 24 hours either by signature on the original report or as a reply to an email containing a scanned copy of the report.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Responsibilities of cell phone and other electronic device usage

- Students should not have cell phones or any other form of communication devices on them at school.
- Smartwatches may be worn only if they are not distracting to the student and the other students in the classroom. Parents should not be contacting their students through smartwatches during the school day. If the smartwatch is deemed to be a distraction, the student will be asked to put it away in a backpack. Parents will be notified.
- If students need to contact their parents, they may use the office phone. If parents need to contact their students, they should call the office.

Responsibilities in regards to internal methods of communication

- Every community has a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children which will be communicated to parents in the corresponding communities via email.
- Please contact staff through their school email (person's first name@prairiehill.com) for all professional electronic communication. Please do not use texting as a means of professional communication.

Responsibilities in regards to external methods of communication

- Our aim is to have clear, professional, and effective communications with all parents, other schools, other educational professionals, and the wider community.
- In our communication, we seek to avoid bias, stereotyping, or any form of discrimination, and strive for unity and inclusion. We wish to recognize and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

Letters/Email

Any communication that needs to be sent to parents via mail or email will be sent by the Montessori Guide/s, the Office Manager, or the Head of School. Guides may forward relevant emails from parents to the Head of School and should always do so if the content is a complaint. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours of receipt.

Telephone calls

Office staff will not interrupt communities for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency or if the phone call was solicited.

Social media sites/blogs

Please note that staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites. Staff will not accept current students as “friends” and are advised to not accept “friend requests” of former students until they are of legal age.

Written reports

At least once a year, Montessori Guides provide a full report to each child’s parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.. Reports are also available in Transparent Classroom.

Newsletters and Friday Email

The Friday email is sent weekly during the academic year. The school newsletter is sent monthly.

School website

The school website (www.prairiehill.com) provides an opportunity to share information about the school and to promote the school to a wider audience. This is also where we will post a calendar with all scheduled current and future events, closings, etc.

Transparent Classroom

Transparent Classroom is the School Management System used by Prairie Hill. Parents are able to see their students’ attendance records, lessons they have received, and any conference reports that have been submitted. The school menu as well as the school calendar and other information are also available on this platform. All parents are given access to the Transparent Classroom website. If parents are having difficulty accessing the site, please contact the Head of School.

Orientation and Conferences

VISITS

A child's first experience is often visits to orient to both the indoor and outdoor environments. These visits may be with or without an accompanying guardian.

ANNUAL TOWN HALL MEETING

There is an annual Town Hall meeting led by the Board of Directors early in the school year. At this meeting, information about the school year, open board positions, and the budget are discussed. All parents are encouraged to attend.

TRANSITIONAL CONFERENCES: (ages 3-6)

A transitional conference occurs before the child moves from the Young Children's Community into the Primary Community or from Primary to the Elementary. This conference provides an opportunity to discuss your child's growth and progress, the process of the transition specifically, and to explain what your child has been working on and has accomplished.

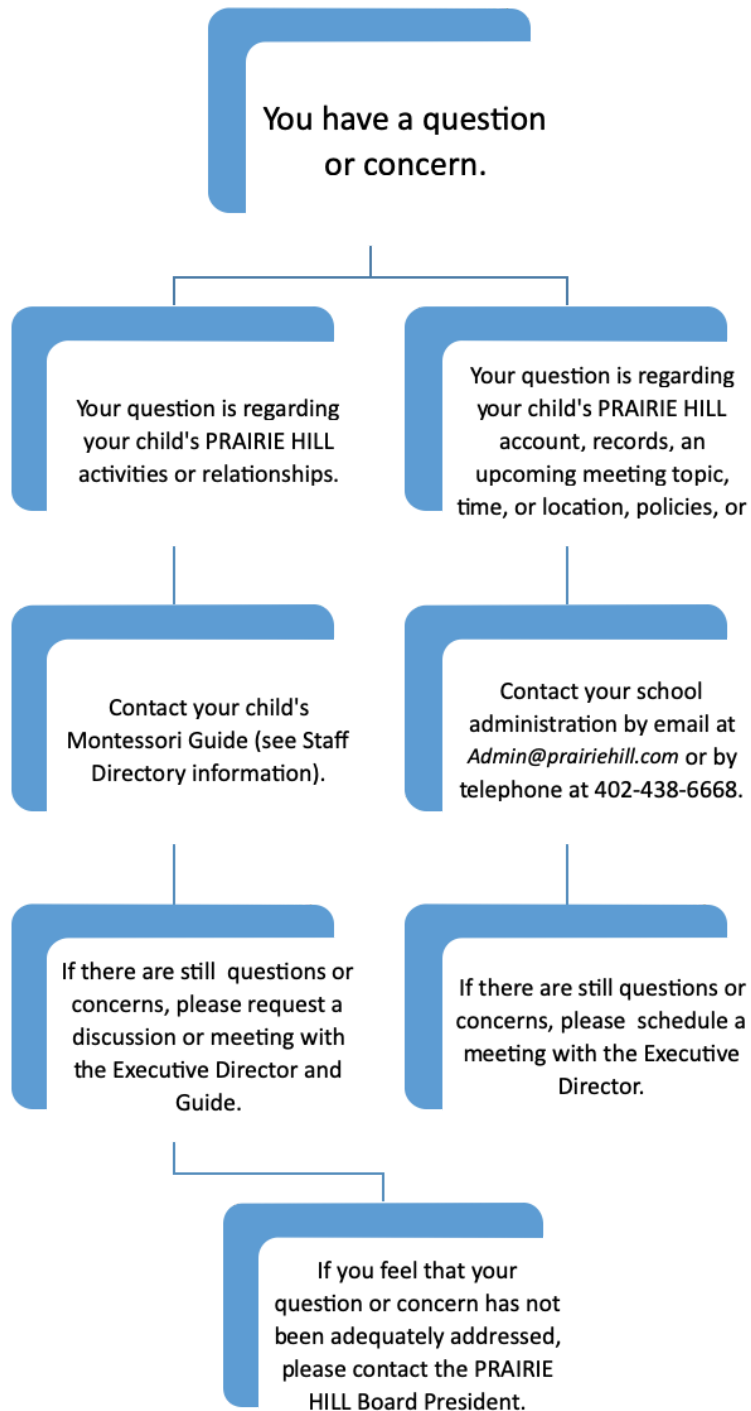
PARENT / GUIDE CONFERENCES

These are offered twice a year in all communities.

PARENT INFORMATION MEETINGS

Parent meetings occur throughout the year covering a variety of important concepts about Montessori at PRAIRIE HILL. The lead guides will let parents know when and what topics are being covered in their meetings.

Prairie Hill Communication Flow Chart



STUDENT/STAFF BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT PROCESS

DISCIPLINE AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The children we serve are between the ages 18 months through 14 years. However, all are in various stages of social development that center on becoming familiar with their emotions and interests as they have new life experiences, and finding words and ways to express those emotions and interests. Healthy three-year-olds are still developmentally very self-centered, while healthy six-year-olds are on the cusp of a new phase of intense interest in constant social collaboration. During these years, children gain more time and experience, and become more conscious of how their actions affect others. This creates a growing ability to become more self-directed, defined as developing intrinsic motives to participate productively and pro-socially.

Children are unique in their ability to do this. However, most fall within predictable developmental patterns. If a behavioral issue poses an undue strain on the emotional or physical safety of the classroom, other individuals in the classroom, or compromises the needs of the group or other children, additional intervention is necessary. Such behavior may also be an indication that the child's greater needs are not being met in our environment. In cases where Prairie Hill does not have the staff or resources to meet the needs of a particular child, the Head of School will assist the family in finding another educational program.

It is the responsibility of the staff to balance the needs of the individuals involved with the needs of the whole classroom community.

- For an isolated incident refer to the incident reporting or abuse reporting policy;
- Depending on the severity, the Montessori Guide(s) with the help of the Head of School in consultation with the child, and parents, may implement additional behavior support strategies.
- In addition to the incident report, for recurring challenges the **behavior support and discipline process** will be put in place.
- In all situations a plan will be implemented to support any individual child who was directly impacted.
- If the implemented plan is not working, and the needs of the child are not being met at Prairie Hill, the family will be asked to find a different placement for the child with the assistance of the Head of School.

All students at PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center are encouraged to speak to available and safe adults if they have any concerns or questions.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT AND DISCIPLINE PROCESS

PRAIRIE HILL recognizes that behaviors occur at different levels of development, and some are part of the learning process. When inappropriate behaviors occur, the guides will be assessing the student using these following questions.:

- Has the child been in the community long enough to know the expectations?
- Has the learning environment been adapted to the child's learning experiences and needs within reason?
- What specific skills does the child need help with to be successful in the environment?

Considering the answers to the above questions, the guide will move forward with the following steps:

- The guide and assistants in the community will document the observed behavior, how often the behavior takes place, and how the behavior was addressed.
- The guide will inform the Head of School of the behaviors and the actions taken thus far and invite him/her to be part of the communication with the parents..
- The guide will communicate with the student's parents to make them aware of the observed behaviors and the actions taken.
- Documentation of all actions and meetings will be kept on record.

If the behavior escalates, the guides will move forward with the following steps:

- The parents will be invited to a meeting with the lead guide and the Head of School to develop a written plan of how the behavior will be addressed, the timeline involved, and the communication protocol that will be followed as this plan is implemented.
- If deemed necessary, the parents will be asked to seek evaluation of the child to get a better understanding of the child's needs.
- The plan will be regularly reviewed by all parties to see if it is appropriate and effective.
- Parents will receive regular communication of the child's progress.
- Documentation of all actions and meetings will be kept on record.

If behaviors continue, the Head of School and lead guide will meet with the parents to determine if Prairie Hill can meet the needs of the student. Suspending the student may also be deemed necessary during this period. Documentation of this meeting and the decision reached by it will be kept on record.

If student behavior involves endangering himself/herself, other students, or staff through violence, threats, harassment, or any other destructive behavior, the Head of School has the right to implement the termination policy for that student. A termination letter will be sent to the parents and be placed in the student's file. The Board President will also be sent a copy of the termination letter.

TERMINATION OF A STUDENT

PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center has the right to terminate any enrollment agreement without prior notice based on any behavior deemed by the staff to jeopardize the general well-being of the students or staff. In this case, tuition will not be charged from the date of termination.

REINSTATEMENT PROCESS

If a student's enrollment has been terminated due to behavior or unpaid tuition, a parent may seek reinstatement of the student through the following process.

- A letter requesting reinstatement of the student must be submitted to the Head of School for review.
- If the student was terminated due to behavior issues, a letter from the school the student is currently attending, a counselor or therapist the student is seeing, and any other professional working with the student is required to verify the student has skills and mechanisms in place to deal with behaviors in a positive way.
- A meeting with the parents, lead guide for the student's level, and the Head of School is mandatory to see if Prairie Hill is the best fit for the student.
- The Head of School in consultation with the Board President and lead guide will decide if the student may be reinstated.
- If the termination was due to unpaid tuition, all past tuition must be paid in full and a regular payment plan instituted for the student's upcoming tuition.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Prairie Hill Learning Center recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student learning and school attendance and desires to provide safe school environments that protect students from physical and emotional harm. Prairie Hill employees shall establish student safety as a high priority and shall not tolerate bullying of any student. No student or group of students shall, through physical, written, verbal, or other means, harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any other student or school personnel. Cyberbullying includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device.

Bullying Prevention

To the extent possible, school strategies shall focus on prevention of bullying by establishing clear rules for student conduct and strategies to establish a positive, collaborative community climate. Students shall be informed of school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for perpetrators of bullying. Prairie Hill may provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior.

Staff Training

School staff shall receive related professional development, including information about early warning signs of harassing/intimidating behaviors and effective prevention and intervention strategies. Based on an assessment of bullying incidents at school, the Head of School or designee may increase supervision and security in areas where bullying most often occurs, such as classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, etc.

Intervention

Students are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another student is being victimized. In addition, the Head of School with the EPC shall develop means for students to report threats or incidents confidentially and anonymously. School staff who witness bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident. As appropriate, the Head of School or classroom lead guide shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators.

Complaints and Investigation

Students may submit to a teacher or administrator a verbal or written complaint of conduct they consider to be bullying. Complaints of bullying shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with the Behavioral Plan specified in the Parent Handbook. Any retaliation towards a student for reporting bullying will result in disciplinary action.

Discipline

Any student who engages in bullying on school premises, or off campus at a school activity, shall be subject to discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion, in accordance with Prairie Hill policies and regulations.

TUITION AND FEE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

A non-refundable one-time Application Fee of \$35 is due with the application following a PRAIRIE HILL tour.

A non-refundable one-time Enrollment Fee of \$350 is required once the start-date is determined.

An non-refundable Annual Fee of \$275 per child is due on May 1 of each year with a maximum amount of \$550 per family. This fee can be prorated in the case of mid-year enrollment.

The Tuition Fee is charged as a monthly amount for half days, full days, or extended days. A child may also attend a *consistent* combination of different time periods (i.e.: half days for three days per week and full days for two days per week). All combinations must be reviewed and approved by the classroom lead teacher(s).

The following table gives the exact fee amounts for the different programs.

HALF DAY – As our minimum program, each child is expected to attend at least this amount of time M-F. Does not include lunch. Does include a morning snack.

<u>Educational Program</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Tuition Fee</u>
Young Children (ages 1.5-3 yr.)	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon	\$1,170/month
Primary (ages 3-6 yr.)	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon	\$990/month

FULL DAY - Includes family-style lunch and snacks

<u>Educational Program</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Tuition Fee</u>
Young Children (ages 1.5-3 yr. year-round)	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	\$1,395/month
Primary (ages 3-6 yr. year-round)	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	\$1,200/month
Elementary / Adolescent (Aug.-May)	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	\$920/month

EXTENDED DAY - Includes breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and enrichment programs.

<u>Educational Program</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Tuition Fee</u>
Young Children (ages 1.5-3 yr. year-round)	7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	\$1,645/month
Primary (ages 3-6 yr. year-round)	7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	\$1,400/month
Elementary / Adolescent (Aug.-May)	7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	\$1,120/month

TUITION PAYMENTS: Tuition is due on the 1st business day of each month.

UNSCHEDULED EXTRA TIME: Extra time is permitted on a limited basis when space permits. Please call or email 48 hours in advance with your request so that staffing may be adjusted if needed. These hours are billed at \$10/hour.

WITHDRAWAL: For Young Children/Primary, a 30-day written notice is required prior to withdrawal from the school. If withdrawal occurs without the full notice, tuition will be charged for the full 30-day time period. For Elementary / Adolescents, if the school receives written notice of withdrawal for the subsequent academic year by May 1, the school will waive the parents' obligation to pay the balance of tuition for the subsequent year, but will not refund or waive the tuition obligation for the current academic year or the Annual Fee, if applicable.

TUITION REVIEW: As a part of an on-going budgeting process, the Board reviews tuition fees and expenses. Tuition increases will be implemented as necessary to obtain a balanced budget and to continue to provide families with excellent Montessori-certified teachers as well as qualified assistants at PRAIRIE HILL. Elementary tuition increases go into effect at the start of August.

OTHER POLICIES

CLOTHING AND DRESS CODE

Due to the nature of daily outdoor play and learning, clothing should allow the child to move freely. Clothing, both indoor and outdoor, should allow the child to be independent of help when he/she has mastered the basic skills involved and allow adults to assist when necessary. The clothing must also allow the child to easily run, jump, sit, climb, etc.

Students should be properly dressed for the elements as they are outside whenever weather permits. Rain jackets and rain boots are needed in the fall, spring, and summer. Snow boots, snow pants, gloves, hats, and other warm clothing is needed in the winter.

Appropriate clothing for each community will be delineated by the lead guides to parents.

Work is done every day at PRAIRIE HILL, with much of that work coinciding with the natural world, both within the classroom and outdoors. **Students and staff must be appropriately dressed for the weather.**

“There is no such thing as bad weather, only wrong clothing”

Margot Waltuch – Longtime Colleague of Dr. Maria Montessori

INAPPROPRIATE DRESS ITEMS:

- Difficult straps, belts, buttons, snaps, and zippers- fasteners that challenge adult skills should not be present on young children's clothing
- Clothing with loose straps, extra belts, missing buttons, broken zippers, overalls, onesies, etc.
- Clothing depicting alcohol, tobacco, drugs, profanity, or weaponry
- Clothing with distracting imagery, especially for young children
- Shirts that do not fully cover the midriff
- Pants that slide down exposing skin
- Strapless tops
- Shorts above mid-thigh (where fingertips land)

MEALTIMES

Mealtime at PRAIRIE HILL offers a perfect learning environment for nutrition, social awareness, and concern for others.

The children participate in the weekly menu planning, which offers a very real opportunity to obtain knowledge about the nutritional qualities of foods and to experience “balancing” a meal both nutritionally and sensorially (colors, textures, hot/cold, spicy/mild, and even smells).

“While it is necessary to give good food to the child, still it must be an educational action.”

Maria Montessori

Food

Only good choices are offered including whole grain breads, frozen or fresh fruits and vegetables, natural seed butters, beans, and cheese. Neither meat and meat by-products products are served at Prairie Hill, but protein requirements are met through dairy products and complementary protein foods. We can make some adjustments for allergies or special dietary needs if necessary.

We strive to offer a variety of nutritious and seasonal foods and help the children learn about them. Children of all ages are involved in preparing the food, setting the table, and clean-up. They are helped, if necessary, to decide on an appropriate amount for serving, and an appropriate number of servings.

Good table manners, interesting conversation, and fine music are important aspects of our lunchtime. The children are encouraged to take at least one small taste of any food they say they do not like, every time it is on the menu, so that they may someday have the experience of discovering an acquired new taste for it. Lunch is served family style. We begin by joining hands and singing the "Community Song."

*Look around and you will see
Community, a Family
We are brothers and sisters,
We are one.*

"Mealtimes are an occasion for the child – repeated every day – to understand that s/he is growing and can participate in life similarly to the persons around her/him."

Silvana Q. Montanaro, M.D.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays and Gift-Giving

Birthdays are recognized at PRAIRIE HILL by a special celebration commemorating the anniversary of the child's birth. The age of the child is represented as s/he carries a model of our earth and walks around a yellow candle (the sun) the appropriate number of times (as it takes the earth one year to move around the sun one time). Everyone helps in the counting and "Happy Birthday" is sung together.

There is a tradition of giving something on the child's birthday to share with others. A gift might be to help your child select an informative book to give to the classroom library to share with all the children. Some topics suggestions are nature, famous persons, history, animals, etc. Your child's Montessori Guide can help you select a book that is not already a part of the classroom collection. A special bookplate is put in the book to recognize the child as the donor and the occasion. The gift is wrapped and presented to all the children at the celebration. Ask your child's Montessori Guide about other needs the community may have.

Holidays

PRAIRIE HILL Learning Center celebrates traditional holidays and other special days through researching and learning about the day or season – the true meaning – and doing a few special activities. Children at PRAIRIE HILL are not bombarded with weeks of preparation and waiting for the next holiday; instead, a short time before the holiday or special day, short conversations about the day, and a few selected individual activities occur. The children may then choose to participate if they wish.

Graduation

A graduation reception is held at PRAIRIE HILL at the end of the school year for the students who have completed the Adolescent program at PHLC (traditionally the eighth grade). The families of the graduates will be contacted about planning and arrangements prior to the celebration. PRAIRIE HILL will strive to honor each child in a way that is personal and comfortable to him/her.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSING

Closings during inclement weather will be determined by the decision of the **Lincoln Public Schools**, with PRAIRIE HILL reserving the right to close at other times, if needed. Late arrivals or early departures are recommended on days when driving conditions require slower speeds, but parents are ultimately responsible for determining what is in the best interests.

When Prairie Hill will be closed due to inclement weather, a text alert will be sent by the Head of School to all families along with an email.

SUPPLIES

The annual fee offsets the cost of the basic supplies students will need at PRAIRIE HILL. We will contact you if something comes up in their particular community that is beyond this scope, but that isn't something that we are expecting in the YCC, Primary, or Younger Elementary Communities.

The Older Elementary and Adolescent Communities typically have camping trips and performance events in the spring where some additional financial support may be needed from each family. We will let you know year to year what that cost is, so you can plan accordingly.

THINGS FROM HOME

PRAIRIE HILL encourages children to share things that are important to them, under the conditions that they are appropriate for all children.

Children will be encouraged to bring only things from nature – plants, animals, and objects related to cultural areas of art, sciences, history, music and geography to share with the other children during together time. This is not something they must do all the time, but rather spontaneously, once in a while.

They will be discouraged from bringing their 'toys' which can be shared much more easily with school friends when they visit each other's homes. Please help your child to decide if what they bring to share will be a gift to the school and left at the school *before* they bring it.

Money, gum, candy, and blankets should not be brought to the school.

ANIMALS AT PRAIRIE HILL

Animals are an important everyday part of the total outdoor environment at PRAIRIE HILL.

The animals offer a first-hand experience for the children to learn about and compare food needs, shelter needs, ways of movement, and reproduction. Children of all ages care for the animals every day, so there are many opportunities to observe them. Following animal handling/care is a hand washing as well as boot washing routine.

FIELD TRIPS AND PARENT TRANSPORTATION

All off campus field trips need to be approved by the Head of School. Once approval is received, the guides may plan the activity. If the field trip includes parents providing transportation, the transportation form must be completed by the parent and submitted to the office. Parents must provide a copy of their driver's license and insurance to drive for field trips.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

The students of Prairie Hill participate in monthly fire drills and twice-yearly tornado drills. A record of these drills are kept for state fire and safety agencies.

STAFF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

EMERGENCY MESSAGES can be left on the Office or Head of School voicemail.

Informational messages: Please call or email whenever your child will be absent or arriving late due to unusual circumstances.

Phone: 402-438-6668

E-mail: admin@prairiehill.com

Individuals answering the phone will take messages unless it is very important that the caller speak directly to a Montessori Guide.

We must know how to reach at least one of the parents/guardians by phone at all times every day. If this differs from that indicated on your child's record in our file, you must call us or send a written message informing us of the change.

The common emergency number, 911, is used in our Martell exchange.

If you need to contact one of the Montessori Guides outside of PRAIRIE HILL's regular business hours, you may contact them via email:

These are the Montessori Lead Guides:

Young Children	Primary	Elementary/Adolescents
Emmett Hudson emmett@prairiehill.com	Sean Hope (FH) sean@prairiehill.com	Angel Schmidt (YE) angel@prairiehill.com
	Erin Kievit (PH) erin@prairiehill.com	Stephanie Smith (OE) stephanie@prairiehill.com
		Jordan Hope (A) jordan@prairiehill.com

Head of School: John Gloe

Office Phone: 402.438.6668 ext. 2 Email: jgloe@prairiehill.com

Office Manager: Amanda Decker

Office Phone: 402.438.6668 ext. 1 Email: admin@prairiehill.com

Special Education Services: April Fearing

Email: april@prairiehill.com