

ROBERT C. PARKER SCHOOL

SCHOOL

COMMUNITY BOOK

2010— 2011



Welcome to Robert C. Parker School

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Dear Parker Families,

Welcome to the twentieth academic year at Robert C. Parker School. We are proud of our tradition of educating a diverse community of students in a safe and respectful environment. The joy of discovery and learning is apparent throughout our halls, on our playgrounds, and in the meadows and woods of our seventy-seven acre campus. Our dynamic faculty works hard every day to create a learning atmosphere that is truly responsive to student needs and interests.

We invite you to use this book as a guide to the vibrant life of our school.

Sincerely,

MegTaylor
Head

ROBERT C. PARKER SCHOOL
PRE K— GRADE 8
FOUNDED 1991
2010 — 2011
COMMUNITY BOOK

MISSION

Robert C. Parker School's Mission is to offer a diverse group of children, through a rich and responsive program, the opportunity to become emotionally secure, intellectually vibrant, ethically aware, and socially responsible.

MOTTO

In caring for our world, our community, and ourselves, we:

Reach out to others with kindness

Speak and act with respect

Strive for understanding of differences

Share our time, our talents, and our energy

HISTORY

Robert C. Parker School was founded in 1991 by a group of parents and educators interested in creating a child-centered school for students in grades four through eight. In the fall of the school's sixth year, kindergarten through third grade were added to the existing program. In September 1998, the school moved to its permanent home and expanded again to include a Pre K program for three and four year olds.

The school was named by its founders for Robert Curtis Parker, principal at Emma Willard School from 1979-1986. Bob Parker embodied integrity, enthusiasm for life, warmth, and energy. He created a learning environment where children developed mutual respect, a love of learning, and an expectation that learning is exciting, interesting, and fun. Bob Parker was also a proponent of multiculturalism and gender equity. Robert Curtis Parker died in 1986 in Troy, New York.

PHILOSOPHY

At Parker, mutual respect underlies all interactions in play and work. The school is a safe learning environment where students are encouraged to become academic risk-takers. Developmentally appropriate curricula, thoughtful challenges, and constructive support help each child succeed. Mixed-age classes offer opportunities for collaborative learning and peer support. Through partnerships between teachers, parents, and children, the school fosters an atmosphere of inquiry and learning at all ages. Curricular studies of differing cultures, heritages, beliefs, family structures, and identities reflect our commitment to involvement with the broader community.

Parker celebrates a learning process that is open-ended, challenging, supportive, and academically unpredictable. Using an inquiry-based, hands-on approach to learning, teachers know students as individuals and work from each child's strengths and interests. Teachers and students collaborate to develop curricula, including school wide themes, that meet the needs and capture the interests of each class. In making active choices about learning, students and teachers participate in creating a democratic community that is responsive to the varying learning styles and strengths of each child.

At Parker we view learning as an active process that continues throughout a lifetime. Genuine knowledge is rooted in children's experiences of work and play. Building on previous experiences, children learn by making connections. We encourage independence of thought, emphasizing critical thinking and problem solving while teaching basic skills and competencies. The school respects the capacity of each child and recognizes that each child develops at his or her own pace. Real learning grows from a sense of accomplishment and achievement that takes place at different times for different students.

Assessment is an ongoing dialogue between students, teachers, and families. The goal is for all students to have high standards for themselves and to be intrinsically motivated to learn. There are numerous and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate acquired knowledge, both collaboratively and individually. Parents and teachers come together to share their thoughts about student work and progress through formal conferences, student self-assessment and teachers' narrative reports.

Community service opportunities, both within and outside of the school, help students to develop a social conscience and a sense of how to become active in creating change. Within the school students engage with each other across the grade levels, sharing work and offering assistance in tutorial settings. Through service in school activities they take ownership of the physical building while strengthening the bonds between faculty, students and older and younger students working side by side. These experiences help them bridge the gap between their life at school and the world beyond.

The Parker community is comprised of students, teachers, administrators, families and friends of the school who are all integral to the life we share together. We come together to celebrate the life of the school within established traditions such as fairs, assemblies, family dances, dinners and sporting events. These events provide opportunities to learn about and from each other as we broaden our horizons and seek to continually widen the circle that is the Parker community.

Written by the Philosophy Committee, in the 1999-2000 school year, and approved by the Board of Trustees on June 12, 2000.

Re-confirmed by the faculty, November 2004.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A Board of Trustees governs Robert C. Parker School. The Board's responsibilities include establishing school policies, providing sound financial management of the school's assets, and hiring and evaluating the Director. Trustee positions are filled through a nominating process that includes soliciting suggestions from the Parker community. Trustees can serve two successive terms of three years each. The Board of Trustees meets five times a year. Board meetings are open to the Parker community.

COMMUNICATION

The School uses an e-mail list serve to communicate timely and important information to parents. In the summer mailing there is a form for email addresses of both parents and/or guardians. Please inform the front desk of any change to your e-mail address, or if you are not receiving e-mail from the school.

PARENT COUNCIL

Parent Council works with the faculty and staff to support the school and its programs. The executive committee of the Parent Council includes President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer and rotates on a yearly basis. The Council meets regularly and is open to all community members. Annual activities may include: organizing fundraisers to support school assembly programming and field day; coordinating volunteers and room parents; and sponsoring educational programs and events. All parents are welcome to join in.

SCHOOL LIFE

THE SCHOOL DAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Before Care K-8
7:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Before Care Pre K
8:45 a.m.	School Day begins
12:15 p.m.	Dismissal for half-day Pre K
3:30 p.m.	Dismissal for full-day Pre K
3:45 p.m.	Dismissal for K-8
3:30 - 5:45 p.m.	After Care

ARRIVAL

Children are expected to be in their classrooms, ready for the day, promptly at 8:45 a.m. K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 classes meet in their homerooms, and the 6-8th graders go to their advisor groups in multi-age homerooms. All students in K-8 arriving after 8:45 will be marked tardy, and must sign in at the front desk. Times tardy will be noted on the progress report.

Pre K students may enter their classrooms at 8:45.

All students arriving before 8:30 must report directly to the Before Care Room.

DISMISSAL

The school day ends at 3:30 p.m. for Pre K and 3:45 p.m. for K-8. If a child must leave early, the adult picking up the child must sign the child out at the reception desk. If a child is going to a destination other than home, the office **must** receive written permission from the parent or guardian. Please remember to notify your bus company or school district if your child is not riding the bus.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

We ask for your cooperation at dismissal so that the end of the day is calm and safe for students. We need a regular dismissal routine for every student. If you are changing your routine, please put the changes in writing and send to the front desk. Students in afternoon Pre K will be picked up at the door to the classroom at 3:30 p.m. and will exit out of the front entry of the school or to the playground for end of the day play. Pre K students riding in a car with an older student will go to After Care at no charge and then be escorted to the car dismissal area.

Students in grades K-8 who ride in cars or car pools will be picked up at the parking lot entry to the school at 3:45, or parents may park in the lot and wait in the library where students will be signed out by their parent. Teachers will escort students to waiting cars or to parents. Please place a large paper in the front window of your car with the names of the children you will be driving to help teachers identify cars. Any student who has not been picked up by 4 p.m. will report to the After Care room and parents will be charged for After Care. All children must be signed

out by a teacher upon leaving the school.

Students who ride buses will be escorted from the front entry of the school to waiting buses and signed out by the teacher.

Students attending After Care will report directly to the After Care room at the end of the day.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If school must close because of a power outage or because your home school district sends the bus early due to dangerous driving conditions, the school will call a parent or guardian of each child to determine if anyone will be home to take care of the child. If by dismissal time we are unable to make contact with a parent or guardian, we will keep the child at school until the child is picked up. If the school closes early due to weather conditions, After Care will also be closed.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

Regular attendance is expected of all students. **If a student is absent please call the front desk by 9:00 a.m.** If a student misses school, the student is expected to do all assignments or make up work. Call the front desk to arrange to get assignments. Teachers must be notified well ahead of time in the case of excused absences in order to have the time to prepare homework assignments.

If a child is ill or becomes ill during the school day, parents will be called to take their child home.

ILLNESS

Please keep your child home **for 24 hours:**

- **For 24 hours after he or she has a fever of 100 degrees or higher**
- **For 24 hours after he or she has vomited**

A student's health records must be current in order to attend school.

RULES FOR MEDICATION

The School Nurse and Health Aides are frequently asked to give prescription and non-prescription drugs to children during school. Our Health Service Program functions under New York State Education Law. To comply with the law, special procedures established by the State are required if a child is to receive medication during school.

- The medication must be delivered directly to the School Nurse or Aide by the parent or parent's designee.
- The School Nurse must have a written request on file from the family physician indicating the frequency and dosage of prescribed medication. The prescription bottle label is not sufficient.

The School Nurse must also have a written request from the parents on file to administer the medication as specified by the family physician.

These regulations are developed for the protection of all pupils as well as school personnel, and it is hoped that parents will recognize their need and importance in spite of the inconveniences these procedures may cause.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

When the weather is stormy or the roads are treacherous, we may close. If the school is closed, every effort will be made to have it announced by 7 a.m. on the following radio and television stations: WROW AM 590; WGY AM 810; WTRY AM 980; WFLY FM 92.3; WYJB FM 95.5; WNYT Channel 13; and WRGB Channel 6. Timesunion.com also lists school closings. Parker School does not have delayed opening. However, children may follow their home district's delays. Please use your judgment about safe driving conditions. Safety is our main concern.

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE PROGRAMS

The Before Care Program runs from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. every day. The After Care Program runs from 3:30 to 5:45 p.m. The program offers enrichment activities, organized and unstructured play, and ample opportunity for supervised homework completion. If parents are at school serving in a volunteer capacity, there is no charge for child-care during that time. Students in K-8 may attend Before Care or After Care on an as-needed basis. Please send a note

in or, if the need is unexpected, call the front desk by 2:30. For students in Pre K, advance arrangement must be made with the Pre K aftercare teacher for as needed aftercare, as spaces are limited.

LUNCH

All children bring their own lunches and beverages and generally eat in their own classroom. Please do not send anything in glass containers. We try to encourage healthy eating habits, so **please do not pack soda or candy in your child's lunch.** Parent Council may choose to provide pizza lunches, in which case a notice will be sent home.

RECESS AND DAILY PLAY

Creative play is part of the daily learning process at Robert C. Parker School. Studies show that children perform best at school when there is a balance of academics, large motor development, and opportunities for problem solving through social interactions. Teachers participate in this process as supervisors, facilitators, and game leaders. Teachers move about the playground area, observing children at play and promoting appropriate behavior through consistent enforcement of playground rules and intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs and help the children with conflict resolution. While encouraging creative and active play, we are also concerned with the safety of our students on the playground.

PLAYGROUND RULES

1. One at a time on the slide. Always go down the slide feet first, not up the slide.
2. Leave sticks on the ground.
3. Throw balls (not stones or sand).
4. Wait for a tire swing by standing at the side of it.
5. If you can't solve a problem, get teacher help.
7. Stay where you can see the teacher.

Pre K students take play breaks as needed. Students in grades K-5 have a half-hour recess each day before lunch and a 20-minute outdoor recess at the end of the day. Students in grades 6,7, and 8 have a 20-minute recess after lunch. Students take other recess breaks throughout the day as needed. Recess is indoors only if the temperature is dangerously low or if it is raining. Students are asked to dress appropriately for outside play. If a child is not permitted to participate in outdoor recess due to recovering from an illness please send a note.

THE MORNING MEETING AND FAMILY CIRCLES

Days at Parker begin and end with class meetings designed to foster good social dynamics and a strong sense of community. Family Circles are mini-assemblies divided by age groups. Pre K-3, 4-5, and 6-7-8 meet regularly for thematic sharing, games, projects, stories or group discussion.

CHILDREN'S STORAGE AND POSSESSIONS

The school day is an active one, so students' clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for hands-on participation, walks through fields or woods, or games at recess. The school provides each child with a space in which to store belongings such as lunch, books, and clothing. Each child should have a complete change of clothes, including shoes, in a box or bag with his or her name on it. We also request that your child keep a spare T-shirt, sneakers and shorts in school to ensure that appropriate clothing is available for PE class. Please be sure to label your child's clothing.

Please do not use students' cubbies for personal invitations.

LOST AND FOUND

The school has a Lost and Found Box in the Before and After Care Room. Lost and found items are donated to Unity House periodically, so please check the box as soon as something is missing. Please label possessions so we can return a lost item.

ASSEMBLY

Parents are welcome at our Friday morning all-school assembly, where classroom activities and individual accomplishments are shared, and we join together in song.

STUDENT BUDDIES

Older and younger classes are paired up, and students within one class are assigned to partner with specific children in another. There will be times when the classes will read and write together, enjoy a picnic lunch, work on art projects, or go apple picking. This system adds to the family atmosphere and helps foster relationships that extend beyond the years at Parker.

THEMATIC STUDIES

Learning is often organized around themes. Broad topics are chosen by the faculty, and some areas of the curriculum will focus on these umbrella themes. Thematic study will find its way into the classrooms in many different manifestations throughout the year. From broad studies in art and civilizations to specifics in math, music, and science, themes present many layers on which to build for all our students, Pre K through eighth grade.

ADVISORS

Each student in grades six through eight is assigned an advisor. Advisors meet with their advisees at the start and end of each day. The role of advisor, first and foremost, is to have a full understanding of the advisee's academic and social development. While the advisor and advisee get together on an informal basis in the homeroom each day, they meet formally at the start and close of each semester to discuss the advisee's goals and challenges. This conversation is not limited to only the advisee's classroom experiences but covers the student's involvement in the many facets of Parker School life. For parents of sixth, seventh, or eighth graders, the advisor is the person to call or meet with for questions or concerns.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the Parker curriculum. Every class takes several field trips each year that enhance themes and units students are studying. Older grades may take day or overnight trips. Eighth graders take a four-day trip. Classes may also go off campus for community service experiences. Parents will receive advance notice of all trips.

Safety of our children during field trips is of primary importance and the following procedures are followed:

- Teachers carry a copy of each child's Health Emergency information with all emergency and medical release information. Please make sure you fill out a new blue card for this year. Current blue cards must be on file before a child can attend a field trip.
- In the younger grades, several adults, in addition to the teacher, may be asked to accompany the class on the field trip. The number of adults depends on the size of the class, the location of the trip, and the transportation method.
- Children are placed in small groups, and one adult is responsible for each small group.
- Teachers take a cell phone on the trip.

Parents are often asked to drive for field trips. To qualify as drivers, parents and faculty must carry 100/300 automobile liability insurance and fill out a field trip eligibility form as well as agree to supervision guidelines. If you accompany your child's class on a field trip, please remember that it is an important responsibility. We ask that you do not bring along siblings, unless there is special permission from the teacher.

FALL OUTDOOR EDUCATION TRIP -- CAMP CHINGACHGOOK

Early each fall the fourth through eighth grade students and teachers spend three days and two nights at an outdoor education center developing leadership skills through team building and outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing, and high and low ropes courses. This is a great opportunity for groups to come together, classes to begin forming cooperative relationships, and new students to become an integral part of the community. Students also gain a sense of independence. After this experience, there are no “new” students.

ELECTIVE PROGRAM

Parker’s club electives vary from year to year, reflecting the interests of the students. Clubs often include a student newspaper, literary magazine, yearbook (both video and print), chess, invention convention, art club and office helpers.

ATHLETICS AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A variety of activities may be offered after school, including intramural soccer, basketball and baseball. Offerings may include flag football, volleyball and other sports as student interest dictates. Transportation to and from games is largely by parent volunteers. We also offer opportunities such as chess, circus theatrics, yoga, art and dramatics.

WINTER FRIDAYS

Winter Fridays are a Parker tradition that gives children a chance to try new activities in new groupings with different teachers. They foster learning, adventure, challenge and community. And they break up those long winter weeks! In January and February, children in grades K-8 spend Friday afternoons engaged in a variety of activities. Children can opt for six weeks of downhill skiing or snowboarding and a selection of other “life sports” and activities. Pottery, drama and photography may also be offered. Some of these activities require extra fees. Parents are invited to join as drivers and chaperones.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE A CONCERN

If you have a concern, it is generally best to first contact the adult closest to the situation. If you have a question about an assignment, your child’s progress or a school incident, contact the teacher or advisor. We always have children’s best interests at heart and we want to solve problems, so we welcome your involvement. If you feel your concerns are not resolved after discussing them with the teacher or advisor, then please contact the Director.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the classroom and is intended to enrich the classroom experience. It is necessary for all students to complete their homework in a timely fashion so that they can fully participate in class each day. Homework is assigned throughout the grades in age and developmentally appropriate quantities and time frames. General guidelines are as follows:

All students should read or be read to for at least 30 minutes each night; and practice math facts as indicated.

Homework is generally not assigned on weekends and during holidays except for reading, preparation of long-term projects or to complete work.

Pre-K	No Homework
K – 1	May be asked to bring in something that relates to a theme: assignment frequency increases during the year.
2 – 3	Generally two nights a week, regular homework assignments: 20 - 30 minutes total. Practice addition and subtraction facts to 10.
4 – 5	Three to five nights per week: 40-50 minutes each night assigned. Practice multiplication and division facts to 12
6 – 7	Four to five nights per week: an hour to an hour and one-half total per night, including long-term projects
8	Four to five nights per week: up to two hours total per night plus thesis preparation and long-term projects

ASSESSMENT

Learning is a process. Assessment is an ongoing dialogue between students, teachers, and families. The goal for all students is to have high standards for themselves and to be intrinsically motivated to learn. There are numerous and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate their acquired knowledge, both collaboratively and individually. Parents and teachers meet together to share their thoughts about student work and progress through formal conferences, student self-assessments, and teachers' narrative reports. Students show evidence of higher level thinking through rubrics, quizzes, projects, presentations, performances, papers and publishing, among other ways.

Parker School utilizes a whole-child approach to assessment that allows us to look at the social, emotional, and intellectual growth of each individual. Teachers have several ways to convey to the students and parents a complete picture of the child's academic progress. For example:

Progress Reports

At the close of the reporting period, each teacher writes a narrative report detailing, for parents and students alike, the successes that the student has had, as well as those areas that remain challenging. Reports are sent home three times a year in K-8, and twice a year in Pre K.

Skills Development

Often a teacher chooses to compile a set of skills germane to their subject area and grade level, and through the use of a check mark system, assesses the student's skill development. Such an analysis would then be included with the narrative.

Conferences

Parent conferences take place two times a year, once in the autumn to help the teachers become acquainted with families and their specific hopes and concerns for their child and to discuss progress to date, and again in the spring when students share their progress in a student-led conference. Parents also meet with teachers on an informal basis throughout the year and are encouraged to do so as they feel it is necessary. This is particularly true for families new to Parker. Likewise, the school may request a parent conference if teachers feel this would benefit the academic and/or social growth of a student.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service opportunities, both in and outside the school, help students develop social responsibility and a sense of how to become active in creating change. Within the school, students engage with each other across grade levels, sharing work and offering assistance in tutorial settings. Through programs like all-school recycling, composting, and buddies, students work on strengthening the bonds among faculty and older and younger students while working side by side. Outside the school, students volunteer with a variety of community organizations. These experiences help them bridge the gap between their life at school and the world beyond.

MUTUAL RESPECT POLICY

At Parker, mutual respect underlies all interactions in play and work. Parker School is an intentionally diverse community valuing commonalities and differences. Our goal is to ensure that every student has an optimal educational experience both cognitively and socially. Respect for all community members is of prime importance. We believe children need to be responsible to and for themselves as well as to and for all others within the school. The rights of all members of the community are respected and valued.

Parker holds common expectations for all adults and children who are part of our community. In all interactions we expect honesty, respect, flexibility, openness to new ideas, punctuality, self-discipline, peaceful resolution of conflict, the demonstration of an appropriate work ethic, and a willingness to help one another in appropriate ways.

At Parker we believe in the inherent goodness of people. Our goal is to seek out the good within each of us. We strive to understand what is motivating colleagues and students and to help each other learn appropriate strategies for dealing with feelings.

We are all educators. Learning about oneself, acting with self-control, and turning negative situations into positive ones are some of the competencies our students strive for. Children need to understand themselves so they can be positive members of their community. We respect children for the people they are and believe that our work

with them enables them to become the best they can be.

When a child acts in an inappropriate manner, school adults respond with action appropriate to the situation. These actions are intended to help the child increase his/her self-awareness. Actions may include discussion, reflection, written reflection, or removal from the setting. Relevant consequences will be assigned in order to help a child reinforce his understanding of his behavior and find appropriate coping strategies if future frustrations arise.

In some cases, it may be determined that Parker is not the right setting for a particular child. This decision will be made by careful consideration among all the adults responsible for the care and education of this child, with the final decision made by the Director.

PATHWAYS TO SELF CONTROL

We believe all children can be kind, respectful, caring citizens who are accountable and responsible for their actions. Children learn and practice self control and social skills when:

- There is a safe, challenging, joyful learning environment.
- Students feel respected, successful and share a sense of belonging.
- All staff and families teach, model and reinforce expected behaviors.

These beliefs are the foundation for the Parker School behavior plan.

At Parker School, all staff use the following pathways, or strategies, to help children develop self control.

Pathway 1: Creating, Modeling, and Practicing the Rules

At Parker School staff and students collaborate to develop our classroom and school rules. The rules help us to take care of ourselves, each other and the school environment. Throughout the day, we model, practice and reinforce our rules.

Pathway 2: Reminding and Redirecting

Reminders and verbal redirections are the primary means of guiding students at Parker School. We recognize that sometimes children forget or will not follow the rules. When a rule is forgotten or broken, staff will speak directly and respectfully to the student about the behavior. Some students may need more than one reminder, but it is generally more effective to limit the number of reminders.

Pathway 3: Logical Consequences

Logical consequences are ways to help fix problems that result from children's words and actions when they break or forget rules. They are used when it takes more than a simple cue to stop a behavior or fix a problem. Logical consequences help children regain self-control, reflect on their mistakes, and make amends for them. Logical consequences should be respectful of the child, relevant to the situation and reasonable.

Logical consequences that children devise and that we use may include:

- "You break it, you fix it" -- children are expected to fix it when they break something or make a mess, whether intentional or not.
- "Apology of Action" is used to solve problems between students when a child hurts another through words or actions.
- "Loss of Privilege" is the temporary removal of a privilege to help a child understand the connection between privileges and responsibilities.
- "Take a Break" in the classroom is a brief time away from the class activity to allow a student to gain self-control.

Logical consequences are not seen as punishments, but as additional forms of redirection. The teacher checks in with the student to make sure he/she understands the reason for the logical consequence.

Pathway 4: "Take a Break" in a buddy teacher's room

If misbehavior continues during or right after "taking a break," the student may "take a break" in a nearby classroom. Students will be escorted (visual or accompanied) to and from a nearby classroom. Once the student is back in her/his classroom and resettled, the teacher and student will talk together about what caused the problem and how it can be prevented in the future. The teacher will inform the parent if a student has taken a break in a buddy

teacher's room.

Pathway 5: Further Intervention

If student behavior warrants it, the office will be called. An adult will come to the classroom for assistance, with the goal of getting the student back on track in the classroom as soon as possible. This may involve escorting the student to the office. The purpose of the removal is to help the student regain self-control, problem solve, plan and rehearse how to re-enter the class and deal with similar situations in the future. Once the student is back in his/her classroom and resettled the teacher and student will talk together about what caused the problem and how it can be prevented in the future. The teacher will inform the parent if a student is sent to the office.

It may be appropriate to skip earlier pathways and go directly to Pathway 5 for a serious or unsafe behavior issue.

Pathway 6: Positive Behavior Support Plan

These pathways to self-control may not be enough for some children to be successful. In such cases, Positive Behavior Support Plans will be developed and implemented with the knowledge and help of families, teachers and specialists. Positive Behavior Support Plans will identify specific strategies and interventions to help the child develop self control. These plans will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Pathways to Self-Control are developed, explained and practiced with students in all grades. In the majority of situations, reminding and redirecting are all that is necessary to guide students.

DOGS

No dogs will be allowed in the school when children are present. Dogs must be on a leash on school grounds.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices including cell phones, games, CD players, and i-pods, must be kept in backpacks and not used at school.

BIRTHDAYS

Please check with your child's teacher before sending in any food to share with the class. We would welcome a book donated to the library honoring your child's birthday.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. While most food allergies produce symptoms that are uncomfortable, for some people, allergic reactions are life threatening.

This policy focuses particular attention on peanuts because they present a special problem: They are the most common culprits in severe food allergies, and they are an oily substance. Peanut oil residue is easily spread from hand to hand, and around kitchen surfaces and lunch tables.

This policy is designed to prevent severe allergic reactions, to prepare faculty and staff to deal with allergy emergencies, and to minimize anxiety on the part of all students, faculty, and staff about the issue of food allergies.

Parents of children with life-threatening allergies must provide the school with a written medical treatment protocol for their child, along with two sets of emergency medication; one to be kept in the child's classroom, the other in the office. It is the responsibility of the parents to communicate all information about the allergy to the homeroom teacher of the student and to the front office.

The school nurse will educate faculty and staff at the beginning of each year about the recognition and emergency treatment of severe food allergies. The school nurse coordinates the overall allergy prevention and treatment program.

The Board supports the implementation of the food allergy policy in the following manner. The guidelines may be modified by the Director from time to time. Specific measures include:

- No peanut butter or peanut products will be served by Parker staff at the School.
- No snacks containing peanut products will be served by the School.
- All children will be instructed NOT to share items from their lunches.
- When there is a child with a nut allergy in a particular class, parents or caregivers may be asked to mark a lunch if it contains any peanut products. It is the parent's responsibility to check ingredients in packaged items in lunch boxes.
- **Parents are instructed not to send home baked goods to school. Other snacks may be sent, excluding snacks containing peanut butter, peanuts, or peanut oil to the School. A list of acceptable "treats" for classroom special events is available at the front desk. No homemade baked items will be allowed to be distributed throughout the classrooms.**
- We welcome parents to bake with students at the school, with the teacher's permission and supervision.
- Hand washing before and after meals and snacks is part of the daily routine.
- Tables will be washed with soap and water after snacks and meals. This is the teachers' responsibility in the classrooms where food is eaten.
- The faculty will educate the students about the reasons for the policies.

This food allergy policy does not guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event at school. We believe, however, that these measures significantly decrease the risk to allergic children, and that they reflect the strong value that our school places on respect for individual differences.

HOLIDAYS AND GIVING

At Parker we honor everyone's celebrations. The school recognizes that families observe holidays in a myriad of ways. The school embraces and respects the traditions of families, and in order to support our mission as an inclusive and non-sectarian school, we do not overtly celebrate specific holidays as a school, nor do we decorate the school with holiday symbols.

Because we are a school that actively seeks diversity among its constituencies, we are sensitive to and respectful of that diversity. We encourage our families to share their customs and traditions and, to that end, our teachers welcome this input and attempt to broaden it in a non-indoctrinating way so that all children feel valued and included.

Our thematic approach offers opportunities for these customs to be woven into our curriculum at Parker. Underlying all holiday sharing are these guidelines: respect, inclusion of all voices in the classroom, and maintaining the integrity of the holiday and culture being shared without actively promoting any one holiday.

By virtue of our own planned rich curriculum, we center our energies all year long on our academic program. If you want to share your traditions, particularly during the winter season, please address your wishes to your classroom teacher to find an appropriate curricular moment to share.

We know that many families like to show their appreciation of teachers at holiday times by giving gifts. In the spirit of our school, faculty members respectfully ask that expressions of appreciation or gifts will be food or small things that children have created, notes or letters, or materials or books for the classroom. Teachers most gratefully appreciate expressions of thanks like these.

ROBERT C. PARKER SCHOOL

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