

Princeton Charter School

2024 Parent Summer Letter

Dear PCS Families,

I hope that this has been a great summer for your family and that you are looking forward to the start of school, whether this is the first year at Charter for parents of Kindergarten students, or the last for parents of eighth graders.

We have had a busy summer with lots of activity in preparation for the start of school. As a reminder, parents need to complete all forms and permissions prior to the start of school. If you have not already done so, here is the [link to the rSchooltoday](#) online site for completing all forms, for registration for the After School Program, and for grade 6-8 sports team participation.

This September will mark the start of our 28th year of operation as a school. Over this time, we have consistently performed at the highest levels of academic achievement. We are very proud of this record of excellence. Last year was notably successful in many ways with the Blue Ribbon Award, outstanding academic achievement by our students, #1 ranking by *US news and World Report* for NJ, selection by the NJDOE for a study on best practices, in addition to so many activities, performances, games, and innumerable individual accomplishments. However, it was equally clear that despite these impressive successes, students also continue to struggle with deficits in social/emotional skills, executive functioning, and at times a lack of compassionate decision-making. While we are not alone in this as a school in the post-pandemic era, it is up to us in partnership with our families to address these challenging issues here at Charter.

This year, drawing from our [Code of Conduct](#), we have chosen *Care for Community* as a theme across all grades and to explore how this value is manifested in the decisions and actions for the different age levels.

We have included this statement in the staff manual and student-parent handbook as an articulation of our goals for the learning environment of the school.

Princeton Charter School is committed to a learning environment that is safe, respectful, compassionate, ethical and equitable. We believe that our diverse community is one of our great strengths, and we celebrate our differences. We are committed to the treatment of all people that is respectful and compassionate. We strive for a community where individuals continue to grow and develop their own moral standards. We strive for a community that values diversity and approaches difference with openness and the desire to understand and embrace it. We strive for a community that seeks to help and support individuals through awareness and action. We strive for a community that speaks up in defense of principles and in support of individuals. We strive for a community characterized by kindness and care.

The School-Home partnership is critical in achieving these goals and we will be working with families on strategies and programs that help develop these values in action for our students. We will share more on this throughout the year.

For now, I am sure students and parents are eager to see class assignments and the schedule for next year. These are now available through PowerSchool. See the instructions below on how to access PowerSchool and your child's schedule.

Please take time to review all information in this email, read the Student-Parent Handbook, and become familiar with the drop-off and pick-up procedures. We have changed the timing slightly for this year. In addition, I have included some information, new staff, and other updates below on the approaching school year.

I look forward to seeing you all in person soon, and I wish you a great last week of summer.

-Larry Patton
Head of School

General School Updates

Calendar Items: The school provides calendar information in two different formats. First, the [calendar of openings and closings](#) for the academic year 2024-25 indicates all holidays, openings, closings, ½ days, parent-teacher conferences, etc. This can also be found as a PDF on the school website.

Second, school events are marked on the school's Google calendar which is located on the website - [Click here](#). Note by clicking on the Google Calendar link in the lower right hand corner of the calendar you can upload school events automatically to your own Google calendar. This will allow changes, additions and deletions from the calendar to update live.

Key events in September:

8/28	Wednesday	Grade 5 Orientation - 2:00 PM
8/29	Thursday	Kindergarten-Grade 4 New Student Orientation, 11:00AM - Gym
9/3	Tuesday	The first day of classes
9/10	Tuesday	5-8 Back to School Night - In Person
9/12	Thursday	K-4 Back to School Night - In Person

Student-Parent Handbook: [See link](#) to a PDF of the 2024-25 Student-Parent Handbook. Please take the time to review the Student-Parent Handbook carefully. You are responsible for following all rules and procedures set out in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Schoology/PowerSchool: In order to support new parents, and refresh people's understanding of Schoology, we will provide some training for parents on Schoology. Please join us for any of three parent Zoom meetings on Wednesday, August 28 at 6:00PM, Wednesday, September 4 at 9:30AM, or Wednesday, September 4 at 6:00PM. ([Use this link for all/any of these sessions.](#)) I will review Schoology/PowerSchool and also be available to answer any other questions you may have.

Drop-off/Pick up Procedures: Establishing an efficient routine for drop off and pickup and establishing a safe parking lot area are two important goals for this year. Please see drop-off and pick-up procedures attached. These will also be sent home in a separate communication as well in order to ensure that people will have reviewed them before the start of school.

Lunch: **Catering Solutions** will be providing our lunches again this year. However, NEW this year- parents will pay for lunches directly through *Catering Solutions*. This will minimize the time and clerical support needed from Charter.

Please note: A number of students have outstanding balances from 2022-2024. You will need to sign into *EZSchoolapps* to close out these accounts.

Orders for the start of school will need to be placed no later than: **7:00PM, Monday September 2, 2024.**

Parents will order lunches directly from *Catering Solutions* using their online platform which is easy and convenient for parents. Meals can be ordered up to the day before or for the entire month in advance. Emergency (last minute meals) can be ordered as late as the “day of” by 7:00AM; however, there are no options for these late meal orders.

The After School Program (ASP) Information on enrolling your child in the after school program is available through rSchooltoday. If you are having difficulty accessing the ASP forms on rSchool please contact Lindsey Donaldson at the Marsee Center.

Facilities: The buildings have been prepared for the start of school. Floors and walls have been touched up and stripped and waxed for the start of school.

We greatly thank the Friends of Princeton Charter School for supporting our amazing staff with much needed upgrades to the two staff rooms.

Entering the Buildings: Students and parents should follow these simple procedures when entering the buildings if dropping something off.

- All students and visitors will only enter through either of the two main entrances, one for the 5-8 building and one for the K-4 building.
- All parents and visitors must sign in at the office when entering the buildings.
- We have provided a drop-off table for parents to leave items for students in order to reduce the number of visitors entering inside the buildings.

Technology: We will provide all students in grades 6, 7, 8 with a personal Chromebook. Students, however, will not receive a chromebook until parents have signed the Computer Use Form on *rSchoolsToday*. In addition, we have a 1:1 Chromebook environment for students in grades 2-5. Chromebooks are available for students in every homeroom plus we have additional carts in science and language classrooms for grade 5 students who may be in a different classroom. These Chromebooks are kept in charging carts in the classrooms and are not carried around by the students.

New Staff and Staff Assignments: Please help in welcoming new staff members to Charter for AY 2024-25:

Kindergarten: Kelsey Yoast, though not technically “new,” will be new to Kindergarten. Last year Kelsey taught grade 2. She will take on the Kindergarten B section this year.

Grade 2: **Katie Tolento** is thrilled to return to the NJ area as our new 2nd grade homeroom teacher. She has a BS in elementary education from the University of Tampa and most recently served as the schoolwide gifted education coordinator and a lead 4th and 5th grade teacher at the Riverview Academy of Math and Science, a charter school in Riverview, Florida. Raised in NJ, she is a product of the Jackson Township schools and she is looking forward to being close to family once again as she is soon to become an aunt!

Grade 3 Language Arts: Nikole Medley returns to grade three language arts. Nikole will co-teach with **Kat Kelly**. Kat holds a BA in history from the University of Delaware and joins us with 15 years of teaching experience in the US and abroad. She taught 3rd and 4th grade in Sweden at the Engelska Skolan Norr (English School North) and 4th grade at the IEST-International English School, also in Sweden. Most recently, she spent two years at the Kent Place School and at the Pennington School addressing the specific learning differences of her students. She brings an abundance of skill and enthusiasm and is eager to return to the classroom in a co-teaching model, concentrating on the ELA skills of our 3rd graders.

Grade 5-8 Mathematics: **Matt Sichel** joins the math department teaching grades 5-8. A graduate of Stockton University with a degree in environmental science, Matt switched gears and pursued a mathematics degree from TCNJ. He has been teaching at the Chapin School here in Princeton prior to coming to Charter. **Allie Walsh** will also be teaching grade 5 and 8 math and has also shifted recently to pursue teaching mathematics. After graduating from Harvard University with a degree in economics, Allie worked in the business world. She has recently been tutoring math in West Windsor.

Please join me in welcoming our new staff members and helping them in their transition to Charter.

Drop-off and Pick-up for 2024-25 School Year

We are committed to the safe operation of student drop-off and pick-up. By following these rules as a collective community, we can maintain an efficient process at dismissal. The Charter School parking lots are very busy, and all members of the community must follow all guidelines to ensure safety.

Read these guidelines carefully.

School Building Entrances

Entrances: Students, visitors, and parents will access the school buildings through the main entrances only for each building. These entrances will be clearly marked (on advice from the Princeton Police Department).

Check in: All visitors and parents must check in at the division office upon entering the buildings.

Delivering items to your children or the office during school hours: In order to reduce the volume and better control entry into the school buildings, parents are asked to leave any items for students at the designated drop off tables with clearly marked student names. The tables will be located at the entrances to the school buildings. (This is also on the advice of the Police Department.)

Driving on campus guidelines (13 MPH)

When driving on campus, all vehicles must maintain **an appropriate speed** and safety standards to ensure the well-being of all individuals on campus. (13 miles per hour) Consider that there are 474 students and staff on campus during the day, entering the buildings and walking through the parking lots in the mornings and in the afternoons.

Parents should always follow the direction of the staff who are supervising the space.

Decorum and Communication: We ask that parents communicate in a respectful and calm manner with each other or not at all. If there are any issues in the parking lot, it may be better to bring the issue to a school administrator rather than attempt to communicate with other parents.

Follow the direction of traffic as indicated:

- The back road along the back of the Campus Center is one way only from Ewing to Bunn during drop-off and pick-up.
- All cars should enter through the upper parking lot on Bunn Drive
- All cars should exit from the lower exit on Bunn Drive.
- Never exit from the upper parking lot onto Bunn Drive.
- **New:** During drop-off and pick up, the exit at Bunn is right turn only, i.e. NO left turn onto Bunn Drive.

Drop-off and pick-up

Children should know clearly whether they are getting picked up, taking the bus, staying late for an activity, or walking home. Communicate early with the school before 2:00pm if there is a change in procedure and be clear with your child what the plan is or if there is a change in the plan. If we do not receive a written change in dismissal procedure by 2pm, your child will automatically follow the regular dismissal procedure.

Follow the direction of staff members who are on duty for drop-off or pick-up. Students who are not picked up by the end of the dismissal time will go directly to the After School Program.

School Bus: The most efficient way for your child to travel to and from school is on the school bus provided by Princeton Public Schools Transportation Department. We urge you to take advantage of this free service. **Any questions or problems should be directed to Princeton Public Schools Transportation at 609-806-4209.**

NOTE: Students may only ride their assigned bus. A student may not board a different bus to go home with a friend.

We recognize that the buses may arrive very early in the morning, but it is also an option to take the bus home in the afternoon only. Parents may want to consider using buses on the way home only as an option.

Key Factors: During drop-off and pick-up, we have identified two key factors in order to maintain a safe and efficient operation.

First Key Factor - Keep the roadway clear of any blockage: cars must be able to move through the lanes at all times. To accomplish this:

- Do not park in the school bus/fire lanes.
- Do not “block the box” at the merge at the top of the parking lot.
- Do not leave cars unattended in the bus/fire lanes, no exceptions.
- **Do not double park when waiting for students at pick-up (Pull into a lined space.)**
- Do not make a left turn onto Bunn drive during pick-up and drop off.

Second Key Factor - the speed at which students load into and unload from the vehicle.

- Children should be ready to enter and exit the car quickly on the sidewalk side. Please determine in advance that the location of your child safety seats makes this possible.
- Do not keep backpacks in the trunk as this causes a delay and a traffic back-up.
- Please stop your car only long enough to drop the student off.
 - Communicate any messages with your child before dropping off.
- If you need to get out of the car, the car must be parked in a lined parking space.
- Do not leave your car unattended if you are not parked in a lined parking space.

Drop-off

Congestion occurs when too many cars arrive in the parking lot at the last minute, i.e. 7:59AM. Parents end up rushing, driving too quickly, and students start their day in a stressful mode. It is important to drop students off early enough to allow time to get to their homeroom, visit their lockers, etc. Drop-off is very calm and smooth from 7:40-7:50 which is a nice time to target. After 7:55AM it can become backed up and busy.

K-4 stay left : At drop-off (or pick-up) for a K-4 student, enter the opening at the northmost point of the school and stay to the left. Use the left lane to pass cars dropping off for grades 5-8. Look to carefully cross over to the right at or just before the middle portion of the walk that runs along the front of the school, i.e., the portion just before the main K-4 front doors. All K-4 students will be dropped off in this middle section.

Do not block the left lane when pulling over to the right. If needed, pull forward and wait to pull in rather than block the left lane for exiting 5-8 cars. (see diagram below)

5-8 stay right: At drop-off (or pick-up) for a 5-8 student, enter the opening at the northernmost point of the parking lot and stay immediately to the right. Proceed to the drop-area at the path to the main entrance of the 5-8 building.

LOCATIONS

Drop-off and pick-up this year will be at the walkway to the main entrance of the K-4 or the main entrance to the 5-8 building. We will have signs indicating these locations.

Students are to be dropped at the curb at any point reasonably close either before or beyond the 5-8 entrance path. We will set out cones indicating the point at which cars can unload students.

Students should be ready to disembark immediately and as quickly as possible. This is not the time to put on coats, stow books and toys, or finish eating. Backpacks should be in the car cabin as getting them from the back of the car is time consuming and dangerous.

Students should not exit or enter their vehicles on Bunn Drive, or at the upper end of the parking-lot. It is tempting to disembark while waiting at the top of the parking lot, but invariably, the cars in front move forward while students are disembarking and it causes a back up onto Bunn Drive; wait until the car is in the drop-off area.

Students should not get out of the driver side of the vehicle as cars may be passing at close proximity.

Drop-off timing

Grades K-2:	7:35-7:45AM
Grade 3-4	7:45-7:55AM
Grade 5-8	7:45-7:55AM

Late Arrival: Parents must escort students to the office after 8:00 AM in order to sign in as late. Parents must park in a space when escorting children into the building.

Pick-up

In order to facilitate a speedy and efficient process during pick-up, please follow these guidelines:

NO STANDING: Cars may not double park and wait for students to arrive for pick up. (You will be asked to move/circle around and re-enter the carline if your child is not available at time of pick up.) Cars that arrive early create the backup problem for the entire school.

Park if early: If cars arrive early for pick-up, which is defined as “any time before the students are available or dismissed for pick-up,” parents must park in a lined space, or pull around and return once students have been dismissed, i.e. no waiting for students to come out of the building.

Do not block the left lane: The left lane must always be open, i.e. you may never wait in the left lane for students or to merge.

Do not block the upper intersection: The entrance intersection at the top of the parking lots must always be kept clear for cars to pull in. All cars blocking this area must move. There is no standing in this area.

Pull all the way down: Students should not load into cars at the upper end of the parking lot. This leads to back up and congestion.

Load quickly: As mentioned above, students should enter cars quickly, do not load backpacks into the trunk, etc.

Pick-up Timing:

Grades K-2	3:05-3:15
Grades 3-4	3:10-3:15
Grades 5-8	3:15-3:30

Buses usually begin arriving for pick-up at Charter at 3:30PM according to the end of their previous route.

Late Pick-up: Students who are not picked up by the end of the dismissal time will be sent to the After School Program.

Accessing Schedule in PowerSchool

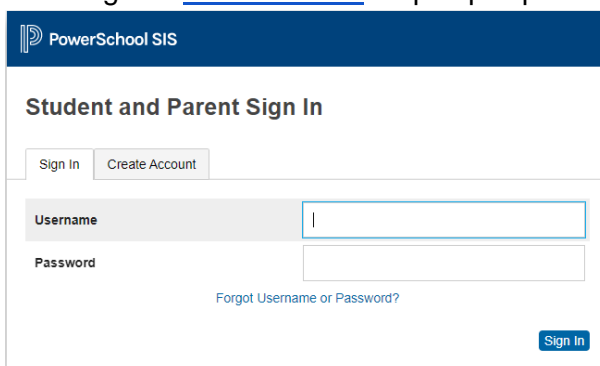
If you are new to Charter this year, you will need to log into Princeton Charter School's *PowerSchool for the first time*. We have sent out instructions for all new students with unique log-in credentials to access your child's PowerSchool account. If you have not received these instructions, please contact Lindsey Donaldson at ldonaldson@princetoncharter.org.

All class placements are final. Please note that every new school year offers the opportunity to make new friends and meet new classmates. Changes in class groupings are helpful for students in developing their ability to manage new situations and to learn to get along with others.

Student schedules are now available in [PowerSchool](#) for you to view. Apologies, schedules will only be viewable from a computer (i.e. not working on the app at present.)

Follow these steps to see your child's schedule in PowerSchool

1. First Log into [PowerSchool](https://pcs.powerschool.com/public/home.html): <https://pcs.powerschool.com/public/home.html>



The screenshot shows the PowerSchool SIS login interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the PowerSchool SIS logo. Below the header, the page title is "Student and Parent Sign In". There are two buttons: "Sign In" and "Create Account". The "Sign In" button is active. Below the buttons, there are two input fields: "Username" and "Password". The "Username" field is currently empty. Below the "Password" field, there is a link that says "Forgot Username or Password?". At the bottom right of the form, there is a blue "Sign In" button.

2. Click on the "My Schedule" icon on the left side menu.

PowerSchool SIS

Olivia

Alerting

SwiftReach SwiftK12

Navigation

- Grades and Attendance
- Grade History
- Attendance History
- Email Notification
- Teacher Comments
- School Bulletin
- Class Registration
- Balance
- My Schedule**
- School Information
- Account Preferences
- PowerSchool Registration

Grades and Attendance: [REDACTED]

Grades and Attendance Standards Grades

Exp	Last Week				
	M	T	W	H	F
HR8(MR-H)					
8a-9(MR-FB)					
9a(MR-FB)					
9b-10(MR-FB)					
10a-10c(MR-FB)					
11-11a(MR-FB)					
11b-12(MR-FB)					
12a-1(MR-FB)					
1a-1b(MR-FB)					
1c-2(MR,W,FR-MB,WB,FB)					

3a18JG 10Z FID-MR,WR,FR

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3. You have two options, Week View (best), or Matrix View

PowerSchool SIS

Welcome, Test Account | Help | Site Map

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Alerting

SwiftReach SwiftK12

Navigation

- Grades and Attendance
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- My Schedule**

My Schedule: [REDACTED]

Week View Matrix View

Enrollments for Princeton Charter School only

	Tuesday 09/06/2022	Wednesday 09/07/2022	Thursday 09/08/2022	Friday 09/09/2022
08:00 AM	Homeroom Khachatryan, Sabina 205 08:00 AM - 08:15 AM	Homeroom Khachatryan, Sabina 205 08:00 AM - 08:15 AM	Homeroom Khachatryan, Sabina 205 08:00 AM - 08:15 AM	Homeroom Khachatryan, Sabina 205 08:00 AM - 08:15 AM
	8th English Miller, Michele M305 08:15 AM - 09:15 AM	8th English Miller, Michele M305 08:15 AM - 09:15 AM	8th English Miller, Michele M305 08:15 AM - 09:15 AM	8th English Miller, Michele M305 08:15 AM - 09:15 AM
09:00 AM	8th Break Juergensen, Briana 300 09:15 AM - 09:30 AM	8th Break Juergensen, Briana 300 09:15 AM - 09:30 AM	8th Break Juergensen, Briana 300 09:15 AM - 09:30 AM	8th Break Juergensen, Briana 300 09:15 AM - 09:30 AM
	8th French Toma, Martha M101	8th French Toma, Martha M101	8th French Toma, Martha M101	8th French Toma, Martha M101
10:00 AM				