



PARENT—STUDENT HANDBOOK

revised August 20, 2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Peoria Academy Parents and Students,

Welcome to the new school year! We are so pleased to have you as part of our PA family. There is no doubt that we are a diverse community of globally-minded students, parents, and educators focused on educating the whole child and preparing life-long learners who are creative, think critically, and communicate effectively. We look forward to partnering with you in meeting the academic, emotional, and social needs of your children.

At PA, we believe that every child deserves the gift of education and the joy of learning. Our teachers are dedicated to creating a learning environment, where students can explore all forms of knowledge, develop future-readiness skills, and surpass their individual expectations. We approach learning with a constructivist mindset, while building a collaborative, inquiry-based culture that honors and values everyone.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, we promote international mindedness and provide our students with opportunities to globally collaborate with their contemporaries from around the world. Global collaboration is a critical component to successful participation in our global economy. We are committed to future-ready students capable of greatness.

The Peoria Academy Parent – Student Handbook is designed to serve as a resource of information that families will need throughout the school year. It contains essential information regarding curriculum and school expectations. The Parent – Student Handbook is also designed to be in harmony with PA's board policy and strategic initiatives. As such, this document is subject to change. Although the handbook is updated annually in preparation for the beginning of the year, changes may occur when new board policies or initiatives are adopted or revised. It is important to note that our handbook is a dynamic document in meeting the needs of our whole school community.

We invite you to partner with us as we create a school that is truly the best place for students to learn and teachers to teach. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly, mdraney@peoriaacademy.org.

Sincerely,

Marissa Draney

Principal

Peoria Academy

PA VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY

Vision Statement: Preparing Students for a Lifetime of Success

Mission Statement:

Peoria Academy is a diverse community of students, parents, and educators working together to provide a rigorous educational experience. Using progressive techniques that nurture the whole child, our independent school fosters maturation, resilience, and creativity.

Philosophy:

We believe that a good school promotes academic excellence. Peoria Academy provides the challenge, support, and freedom for students to realize their talents and develop a love of lifelong learning. We believe that students thrive in a school where intellectual stimulation is high and where individual attention is given in a warm, friendly, and nurturing environment.

We believe that a strong core curriculum is essential for academic accomplishment. At the same time, we stress the development of each child's natural creativity, and we encourage students to express their own ideas. Successful learning involves each child in an active process of discovery, invention, and problem solving.

We believe that a good school needs parental support. A school shares with parents the responsibility to teach children to embrace high moral standards. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the life of the school.

We believe that in order to prepare students for a life in an ever more diverse society, a school should strive to attract students that reflect the diversity of that society. Within this context, a school should promote tolerance of, and an appreciation for, differences among people. Students should interact respectfully and constructively with others. To support these beliefs, Peoria Academy:

- assigns a high priority to nurturing and developing the individual
- challenges students to realize their full potential
- offers a safe and supportive environment
- stimulates excitement about the process of learning
- provides a strong curriculum enriched by projects, simulations, performances, and other creative activities
- emphasizes hands-on, application-based learning
- inspires self-respect through the pursuit and achievement of excellence
- requires respect for, and consideration of, others
- opportunities for a child's growth in responsibility

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

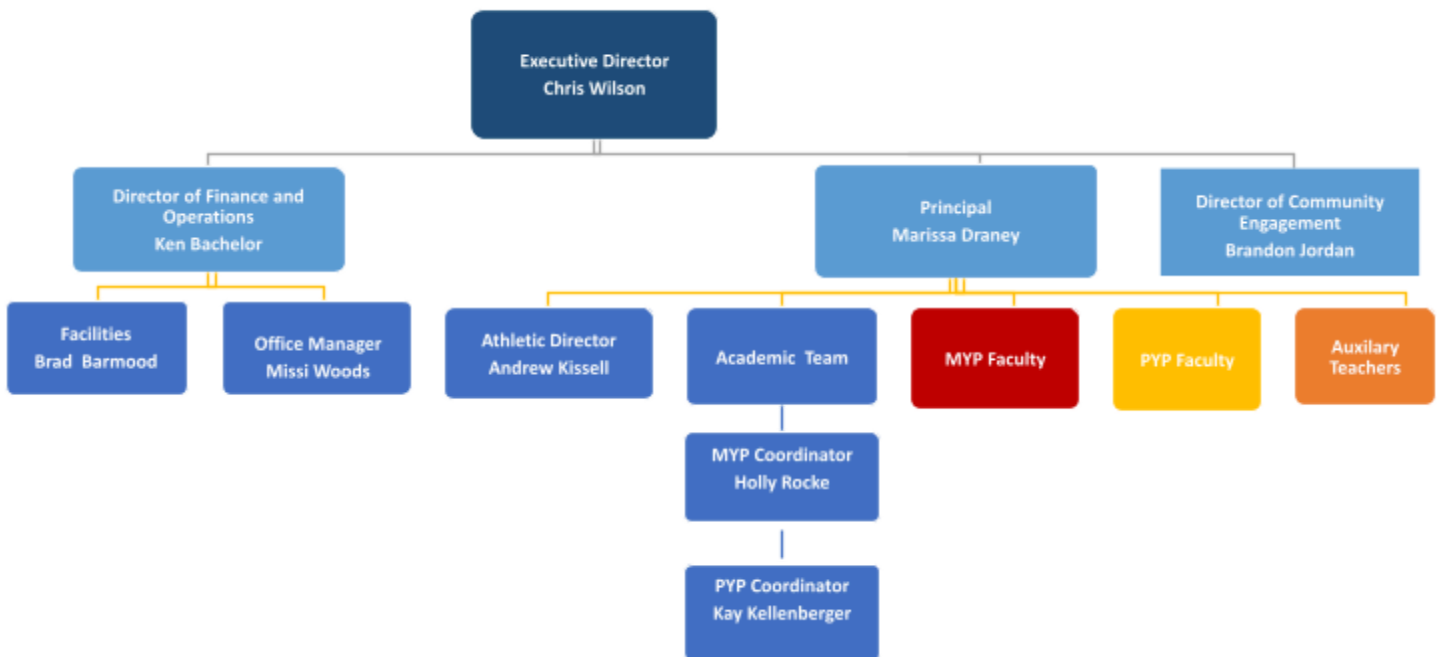
Board of Trustees:

Peoria Academy is governed by a Board of Trustees, which delegates the management of the school to an appointed Executive Director. The Board of Trustees' primary functions are as follows: the establishment and support of the philosophy of the school; the employment and evaluation of the Executive Director to operate the school within established goals and aims; and the preservation and enhancement of the assets of the school, including land, buildings, and other income.

The Parent Council:

The primary purpose of the Parent Council is to supplement all the programs of the school for the benefit of both students and faculty. A major goal of the Parent Council is to promote parental involvement in order to enhance parents' awareness of their child's activities, to promote stronger relationships with the faculty, and to provide a greater understanding of the school. The Parent Council also coordinates several fundraising activities. Funds raised are used for classroom equipment and materials and other special events that enrich the students' educational experience and social growth.

Leadership Organizational Chart:



Who Do I Talk to About...

Chris Wilson	Executive Director	cwilson@peoriaacademy.org	School Policy Staff Development Fundraising Admissions/Enrollment Strategy and Marketing Concerns not resolved by other staff
Marissa Draney	Principal	mdraney@peoriaacademy.org	Master Schedule/Master Calendar Curriculum Professional Development Field Trip Information Academic Technology Concerns about your child (if not resolved by teacher) Admissions School tours Newsletter
Ken Bachelor	Director of Finance and Operations	kbachelor@peoriaacademy.org	Financial Statements Financial Aid Billing Building and Grounds Payroll and Benefits Spending and budget Advertising
Brandon Jordan	Director of Community Engagement	bjordan@peoriaacademy.org	Fundraising Strategy and Marketing Community Outreach Volunteerism
Missi Woods	Office Manager	mwoods@peoriaacademy.org	General Information Allergies and Medication Emergency Card Medical/Dental Forms Uniform Questions Contact Info Changes Lunch Orders Records and Transcripts Student Information System
Mandy Bennet	- Librarian - Auxiliary Program Coordinator	mbennett@peoriaacademy.org	Before & After Care Enrichment programming Library
Andrew Kissell	Athletic Director	akissell@peoriaacademy.org	Athletics

SCHEDULES

Current Academic Calendar



2024-2025 Calendar

August

20th Meet The Teacher Night 5 pm - 7 pm
21st First Day of School

September

2nd Labor Day - No School
13th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)

October

8th Fall Town Hall
11th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
14th Indigenous People's Day - No School
18th Parent / Teacher Conferences - No School
25th Trunk or Treat
28th - Nov 1st Spirit Week

November

7th & 8th Fall Musical
11th Veteran's Day - No School
15th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
25th - 29th Fall Break - No School

December

10th Winter Concert
20th (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
23rd - Jan 3rd Winter Break - No School

January

6th First Day of Spring Semester
20th MLK Day - No School

February

14th Spring Town Hall
14th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
17th President's Day - No School
28th International Fest

March

7th Parent / Teacher Conferences - No School
14th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
24th - 28th Spring Break - No School

April

10th & 11th Spring Play
11th Professional Development (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)
12th Peoria Academy Annual Gala
18th Good Friday - No School
25th Peoria Academy Model UN Summit

May

20th Spring Concert
22nd Kindergarten Graduation
22nd 8th Grade Graduation - 6PM
23rd Last Day Of School (1/2 Day - 11:30 am Dismissal)

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

OCTOBER 2024						
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27	28	29	30	31		

DECEMBER 2024						
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29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2025						
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APRIL 2025						
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SEPTEMBER 2024						
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29	30					

NOVEMBER 2024						
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JANUARY 2025						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

MARCH 2025						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

MAY 2025						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Half Days

No School

School Event

Last edit: 7/11/2024

Current Weekly Schedule

Lower School (Primary Years Programme/PYP): Specials

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Start of School				
8:40am-9:10am	Pre-K Blue PE	Pre-K Gold PE	Pre-K Blue PE	Pre-K Gold PE	Pre-K Blue Art
9:15am-10:00am	1 Art	2 Art K Music	1 Art 3 Music 4 Music	2 Art K Music	3 Music 4 Music Pre-K Gold Art (9:15-9:45)
10:00am—10:20am	K—4 Recess				
10:00am-10:30am	Pre-K Gold Spanish	Pre-K Gold Music Pre-K Blue Spanish	Pre-K Blue Music Pre-K Gold Spanish	Pre-K Gold Music Pre-K Blue Spanish	Pre-K Blue Music
10:45am-11:30am	3 Spanish 4 Spanish	2 Spanish 1 Music	3 Spanish 4 Spanish 2 Music	2 Spanish 1 Music	3 Spanish 4 Spanish 2 Music
Lunch / Recess	Pre-K Recess 11:00 AM-11:30 AM / Lunch 11:30 AM—12:00 PM K—4 Lunch 11:40 AM—12:05 PM / Recess 12:05 PM—12:25 PM 5—8 Lunch 11:10 AM—11:35 AM / Recess 11:35 AM—12:00 PM				
12:30pm—1:15pm	3 PE 4 PE	3 Art 4 Art	K PE	3 Art 4 Art	3 PE 4 PE
1:20pm—2:05pm	K PE	1 PE 2 PE	K Art	K Art	1 PE 2 PE
2:00pm—2:30pm	Pre-K Blue Art		Pre-K Gold Art		
2:25pm-2:55pm		K Spanish	1 Spanish	K Spanish	1 Spanish
3:00pm	End of School				

Middle School (Middle Years Programme/MYP): A/B Block

Time	A-Day	B-Day
8:30am-9:40am	Block 1	Block 5
	5 Spanish (Hardy)	5 Science (Kissell)
	6 Science (Kissell)	6 Math (Amina)
	7 Math (Amina)	7 Ind/Soc (Rocke)
	8 Lang/Lit (Rocke)	8 Spanish (Hardy)
9:40am-10:00am	Recess	Recess
10:00am-11:10am	Block 2	Block 6
	5/6 Art (Otten)	5/6 Tutorial (Kissell)
	7 Lang/Lit (Rocke)	7/8 Art (Otten)
	8 Math (Amina)	
11:10am-12:00pm	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess
12:00pm-1:10pm	Block 3	Block 7
	5 Math (Gould)	5 Ind/Soc (Gould)
	6 Design (Amina)	6 Ind/Soc (Rocke)
	7 Science (Kissell)	7 Design (Kissell)
	8 Ind/Soc (Rocke)	8 Design (Amina)
1:10pm-2:20pm	Block 4	Block 8
	5 Lang/Lit (Gould)	5 PYP (Gould)
	6 Lang/Lit (Rocke)	6 Spanish (Hardy)
	7 Spanish (Hardy)	7/8 Tutorial (Mandy Bennett)
	8 Science (Amina)	
2:20pm-3:00pm	5/6 PE (Mr. Kissell)	7/8 PE (Mr. Kissell)
	7/8 Music	5/6 Music

DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS

School Hours:

- Regular school hours are from 8:30 AM—3:00 PM. Regular student drop-off is from 8:15 AM—8:30 AM.
- Before school enrichment activities are offered from 7:30 AM—8:15 AM daily. Registration is done by semester, for a fee. Drop-ins for select offerings are permitted by appointment, also for a fee..
- Dismissal is at 3:00 PM daily and all students not attending after school enrichment activities must be picked up before 3:30 PM.
- After school activities and after care are offered from 3:00 PM—5:30 PM daily. Registration is done per semester, for a fee.. Drop-ins for select offerings are permitted by appointment, also for a fee.
- All students must be picked up from school by 5:30 PM unless there is a special event.

Lunch:

All students will have a forty-five minute lunch/recess period each day. Students use this time to eat lunch and go outside for recess.

Students may either purchase a hot lunch from the school or bring their own sack lunch. Water is available to students at lunch as well as any time of the day.

How to Order a Lunch:

You can choose to order lunches for the whole month, the week, or specific days. Lunches can be ordered through our website by clicking the Student Life tab and selecting the Lunch Program. You will find monthly menus listed, where you can select lunches and pay online.

Refrigerators:

We do not have refrigerator space for students. You will need to pack your child's lunch in an insulated container to keep the foods chilled.

Microwaves:

We do have microwaves to accommodate our students. You will need to pack your child's lunch in microwave safe containers.

A Forgotten Lunch:

An alternative lunch for students who have not pre-ordered their lunch will be available if their lunch from home was forgotten. Please keep in mind that preparing a lunch at the last minute is a disruption to our lunch program, and we would certainly appreciate your every effort to be sure your child has his/her lunch for the day. Your account will be charged for a replacement lunch.

Outside Food:

To minimize disruption to our students and program, we do not allow families to send or deliver lunches from fast food or other restaurants. Families who do not participate in the catered lunch program at Peoria Academy should prepare a lunch at home for their child.

Food Allergies:

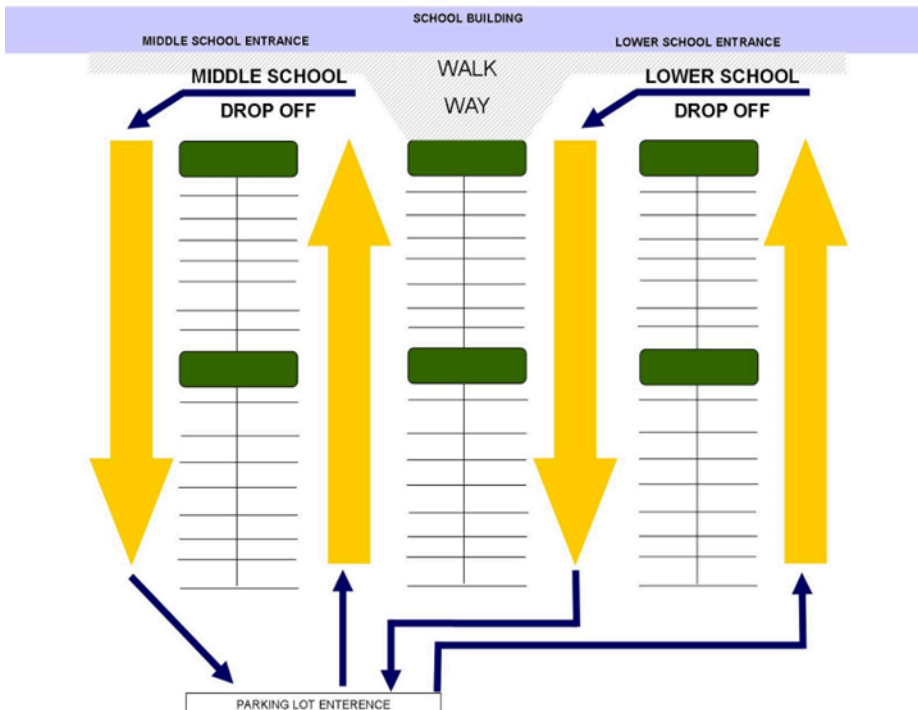
We are very conscious of food allergies on school campus. We ask that all the children be careful in handling any snacks or lunches brought from home. A voluntary allergy table is located in the lunchroom for those students with allergies. All teachers receive allergy information and response procedures. The school may, from time to time, require families to eliminate certain allergens from our environment in the case of life-threatening allergies.

Lunch During Camp PA:

Because our enrollment is lower on the days that we do not have regular school, we cannot provide the hot lunch program. Please bring a sack lunch on these days.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

- Students should enter the school building through the Willow Knolls entrance. Cars using the circular drive must follow the one way traffic. **Please do not drive through the crosswalk area in front of the school.**



- All students enter the building through the main doors. If a parent needs to speak to a teacher, it is policy to schedule a time to talk before 8:20 AM or at another time after school.
- Middle school students may report to their advisory between 8:15 AM and 8:30 AM. Students who arrive before 8:15 AM must be enrolled in before-care.

Picking Up Students Before Dismissal

- **Parents MUST report to the office to sign in/out students.**
- If there is a need to restrict those who may pick up your child, please contact the office.
- If something unexpected comes up during the day and alternate arrangements for pick-up have been made for your child, please contact the office so that we can notify your child that a change has been made through our messaging system.
- However, whenever possible, please make your pick-up arrangements ahead of time.

School Closing:

- In the case of inclement weather and/or the event that the school needs to be closed, the Principal will send out a communication and the announcement will be posted on the PA website at www.peoriaacademy.org.
- The announcement will also be broadcast on the following television stations: WEEK, WHOI, and WMBD.
- In the event that the school is capable of opening later in the day, a late-start school day schedule of 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM will be implemented and communicated to the community.
- However, parents are the final judges in determining the advisability of traveling to and from school. Working parents should have an emergency child-care arrangement made early in the year for these occasions. Make-up dates may be arranged by the administration.

Visitors:

All visitors must report to the office upon arrival to let a school official know the nature of their visit to the school. All visits should be prearranged with school personnel and should be limited to the purpose of the approved visit. Visitors are required to wear a visitor pass badge. All parents must check in the office when bringing their child to school late or taking their child home early. We ask that all parents or guardians wishing to visit a child's classroom or teacher contact the teacher in advance so that we can plan for your help in the classroom and notify the office of the visit. Classroom visits by parents for observational purposes are limited to 60 minutes.

STUDENT SERVICES

Admissions and Enrollment:

Students are selected for admission to Peoria Academy on the basis of their intellectual potential, developmental maturity, level of academic achievement, and readiness for the school's programs. The supporting evidence varies by grade level, and it may include progress reports, test results, portfolios, recommendations, and/or an interview. In all cases, Peoria Academy retains the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether to select or re-enroll a student for admission. Peoria Academy does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, physical disability, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid program, athletic program, and other school administered programs. In order to be enrolled in the Early Childhood program, students must be 3 years of age by September 1st. For enrollment into Kindergarten, the school uses 5 years of age by September 1st as a guideline.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important to successful learning and the development of sound school attitudes and work habits. Students are expected to attend school each day unless sickness or special family circumstances interfere. We ask that you arrange medical and dental appointments at times that do not interfere with school commitments whenever possible. Parents should telephone the school before the start of the school day to report their child's absence or tardiness. In addition, parents should report any contagious disease to the school immediately. Health permitting, all absentees are expected to keep up with daily assignments. After more than 17 days of absences due to illness (10% of the academic year), parents may be required to have a doctor sign for additional absences from school. Excessive absences of more than 10% of the school year may result in grade retention (repeating the current grade level).

Tardiness

Students who arrive at class after 8:30 AM are considered tardy. Students who arrive at school after 8:35 AM must report to the office before going to class so that attendance may be accurately recorded. In the case of inclement weather or excused absences, students may be excused from their tardy. Tardiness disrupts not only the class but also the progress of the students, and your assistance in getting your child to school on time is appreciated. Excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary action and/or a referral placed in the student's file.

Vacations

Family travel and vacation plans should be made only during school vacations and students are expected to attend school on the days before and after vacation breaks. However, we realize that some families have no choice regarding vacation times. While teachers make every effort to plan assignments in advance, they will not provide future assignments or be required to give extra help to students returning from travel or other unexcused absences. Please realize that preparing assignments in advance is often very difficult for teachers, especially for longer periods of time. It is almost impossible for teachers to be able to know exactly what they will be covering while a child is absent; they may not get as far as they thought or they may get further. It is expected that tests be taken upon the day of the student's return. The expectation is that all homework assignments will need to be turned in within two days of the student's return. After two days, the same policies will be in effect for other work not turned in on time (reduction in grade).

School Uniform

General Requirements:

Clothing will be appropriate for a school setting.

- Uniforms should exhibit no commercial logos.
- Jewelry may be worn in moderation.
- For grades K-8, uniform shirts should be buttoned and tucked in.
- Outerwear (jackets, coats, boots, etc.) is not to be worn inside during the school day.

- Uniform shoes may be of any color and should have a closed heel and toe. Shoes should allow for safe running, climbing, and other play activity. Crocs, flip flops, sandals, cleats, hiking, or fashion boots, etc. are not part of the school uniform.

Uniform Specifications:

School uniforms consist of combinations of the following:

- collared shirt (polo or button-down)
- shorts, pants, skirt, skorts, or jumper
- shoes (closed toe and heel)

Shirts and jumpers should be logo-free or have a Peoria Academy logo. Past and current logos are acceptable.

Pants, skirts, skorts, and tights should be logo-free.

- Students wearing skirts or jumpers should also wear tights or bike shorts; bike shorts should not extend below the hem of the skirt or jumper.
- All skirts, skorts, and jumpers should end no higher than 3 inches above the knee. In cold weather, tights are encouraged for any students wearing skirts and skorts.
- Jeans, capri pants, cargo pants, and cargo shorts are not acceptable for uniform wear.

Sweatshirts without hoods, sweaters, and fleece vests/jackets may be worn inside during the school day. These should be logo-free or have a Peoria Academy logo. Past and current logos are acceptable.

Students in grades 2-8 should wear belts when belt loops are present.

Uniform Colors:

Uniform	Color
Shirts	white, light blue, and navy blue
Pants, Shorts, Skorts, and Jumpers	navy blue and tan/khaki
Socks and Tights	black, white, navy blue, and cream (solid colors)
Belts	black, brown, navy blue, and khaki (solid colors)

PE Uniform

- PE uniforms will need to be purchased from Peoria Academy.
- All 4th-8th grade students who have not yet purchased a PE uniform will be fitted for their shirt and pair of shorts on their first day of PE class.
- A charge of \$20.00 will be added to their account to cover the cost.

8TH Grade Students ONLY

- Eighth grade students will be allowed to wear a shirt of a differing color, in lieu of uniform colors, that will designate them as eighth graders.
- They will pick their shirt color at the end of the 7th grade year.

Uniform Free Days

- The last Friday of every month will be a Uniform Free Day.
- Please make choices appropriate for a school setting.

Preschool Toilet Training Policy

To attend preschool, children must have achieved toilet training and be consistently wearing underwear. A child who experiences daily accidents will not be considered toilet trained. This policy is implemented due to the true preschool classroom settings in operation. In cases of medical reasons or extenuating circumstances causing a delay, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the teacher and principal. Notably, the use of pull-ups is not considered as meeting the criteria for toilet training.

Why is Toilet Training Required Before Preschool?

- Strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups exist, and our classrooms lack the necessary facilities.
- Changing a child's soiled clothing diverts an adult from teaching and supervising other students, impacting overall learning time and class interaction.

Criteria for a Toilet Trained Child:

A toilet trained child is one who can:

- Communicate the need to use the restroom proactively.
- Recognize the urge to stop activities and use the bathroom.
- Independently manage pulling down and up their clothes.
- Wipe themselves after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds).
- Get on/off the toilet independently.
- Wash and dry their hands.
- Delay using the bathroom if necessary.
- Wake up during nap time to use the bathroom if needed.

Throughout the day, teachers will prompt children to use the bathroom. While assistance is available, children are expected to perform toileting activities independently.

It's acknowledged that transitioning to a new environment may cause setbacks in toilet training. Therefore, a one-week grace period is allowed for children to adjust to the classroom. Parents are advised to dress their children in easily manageable clothing and provide a complete change of clothes for potential accidents. Parents will be notified if a child experiences a toileting accident.

Handling Accidents:

- Accidents, defined as unusual incidents, should occur infrequently.
- Teachers will assist children in changing clothes, emphasizing independence.
- Soiled clothing will be returned to the child's bag in a plastic bag.
- Children having accidents will not be humiliated, punished, or belittled.

Probationary Warning:

If a child has three or more accidents within a week, a probationary warning will be issued. Another accident during this period may result in the child staying home for at least one week until securely potty trained. The child's spot will be reserved for the remainder of the month. This practice aligns with standard procedures among area schools.

If a child has a bowel movement in their pants, parents will be immediately contacted to take them home. A mandatory one-week at-home period for revisiting potty training is required before the child can return to school.

I acknowledge and have reviewed the preschool toilet training policy:

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Locks and Lockers

Lockers are available for the use of all students. We do not allow locks on our lockers, so please do not store valuable items in your locker. All lockers should be kept free of writing or decals, or inappropriate pictures. The use of magnets is preferred over tape to secure photographs, notes, etc. The school will not assume responsibility for articles left in the lockers. The school reserves the right to inspect the contents of lockers or any other property without prior notice. All book bags (including rolling bags with wheels) must be able to fit into the student's locker.

Field Trips

Field trips will be taken periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified by their child's teacher in advance of the field trip date. Parents may withdraw their child from school on a day of a field trip if they do not want their child to participate in the event, but it is important to recognize that most field trips are a critical component of the curriculum. Parent chaperones are asked to leave siblings at home. Occasionally, parent drivers provide transportation. These drivers will have signed a waiver and presented license and insurance information.

Parties and Birthdays

Parents are welcome to bring small treats for their child's class for birthday celebrations. Please refrain from organizing parties. Arrangements should be made in advance with the classroom teacher. Please check with your child's teacher to learn of any food allergies of the children in the classroom and avoid serving those foods. Birthday party invitations given on campus should include all the child's classmates.

Messages from Home

Messages will be delivered to students in class only when there is an emergency. Messages from parents to the school should be written, not orally transmitted to their child. Messages to teachers should be communicated through email. Teachers periodically check their mailboxes and email throughout the day. Please give teachers 24 hours to reply to messages.

Use of the Telephone

Students are permitted to use the office telephone, with permission from the office staff. In order to be courteous and not to tie up all the phone lines, conversations need to be brief.

School Directory

The office will publish an online directory which includes names of parents and students attending Peoria Academy, addresses, and phone numbers. Parents may elect not to publish information in the directory, and should indicate their wishes on their school contract. The directory is not to be distributed to others for advertising or marketing purposes. In addition, parents should refrain from using the directory to mass-email parents regarding school issues.

Lost and Found

Students are encouraged NOT to bring valuable personal items to school. A lost and found area is maintained throughout the year directly adjacent to the Teacher's Lounge.. Students and parents are encouraged to check regularly for lost

items. Following fall and spring parent-teacher conferences and at the conclusion of the school year, clothing and other personal items not claimed will be integrated into the Bulldog Boutique or given to charity.

Lost Books

Students will be expected to reimburse the school for the replacement of any lost books (textbooks, library books, etc.) or school materials that were assigned to them. Students who have outstanding balances will not receive transcripts until those balances are paid.

Newsletter

The school produces a weekly electronic newsletter informing parents of upcoming events. This newsletter is a major source of communication from the school. Parents are expected to read each weekly newsletter. More details about any school events may be listed on the school's website. Parents should check the website regularly for additional school news. Teachers in PYP (grades Pre-K – 5) publish classroom newsletters on a regular basis, and the MYP coordinator (grades 6 – 8) sends bi-weekly newsletter updates for all of the middle school. At various times throughout the year, the school will communicate important information with you via email.

Religion

The students of Peoria Academy are from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds; no particular religious teachings or doctrines are espoused by the school. Classroom activities may include cultural events with a religious origin if participation is designed for educational purposes and a limited number of cultural artifacts are used for classroom display.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Peoria Academy admits students of any race, color, sexual orientation, ancestry, religious affiliation, national and ethnic origin, to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to its students. The school does not discriminate in the administration of any institutional programs.

CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

Introduction to the International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a not-for-profit foundation, motivated by its educational mission and focused on each individual student. Its core values include: a mission that aims to create a better world through education. Overall, IB has a reputation for high standards that prepare students for life beyond post-secondary education, and a commitment to international mindedness that embraces diversity.

What makes IB unique?

- IB offers a continuum of education, consisting of three programs for students aged 3 to 19.
- IB has a reputation for high-quality education sustained for over 50 years.
- IB encourages international mindedness in students. To do this, IB believes that students must first develop an understanding of their own cultural and national identity.
- IB fosters a positive attitude for learning by encouraging students to ask challenging questions, to critically reflect, to develop research skills, to learn how to learn, and to participate in community service.
- IB ensures that the programs are accessible to students in a wide variety of schools – national, international, public, and private.

IB Mission

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB Learner Profile (LP)

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The LP is IB's mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century. These are the values that should infuse all elements of the three programs and, therefore, the culture and ethos of all IB World Schools. The IB LP are attributes that should be embodied by students, staff and parents.

IB students strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas, and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

IB parents strive to be:

Inquirers	They use their skills to actively encourage and support the curiosity of their child. They foster a love of learning and strive to help their child be an independent learner.
Knowledgeable	They strive to be open to concepts, ideas, and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, you have a base of knowledge to encourage your child to develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of thinking.
Thinkers	Use critical thinking skills to creatively approach and solve complex problems and understand the significance of making reasonable and ethical decisions.
Communicators	They strive to understand and express ideas and information confidently with their children. They demonstrate how to work effectively and willingly in collaboration with the schools teachers and administration.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. They teach their child to take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures, personal histories, and parenting philosophy. They are open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of the school's students, parents, teachers, and administration. They seek and welcome alternative points of view and are willing to grow as a person and parent from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of not only other students and parents but also the school's teachers and administration. They have a personal commitment to their child's education and take action to make a positive difference in the lives of the school community.
Risk-takers	They embrace positive change and encourage their child to explore new ideas and different approaches to learning. They teach their child to be brave and articulate in defending their own beliefs and opinions.
Balanced	They understand the importance for their child to have intellectual, physical, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to the learning and growth of their child. They are able to assess and understand their child's strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Parents as Partners in the IB

Parents are the first and most significant educators of their children. From the moment your children are born, you have instinctively supported their learning. When they were learning to talk, you encouraged them by talking to them, praising and accepting their attempts, giving them immediate feedback, and showing real pleasure in their efforts.

Children learn from the models provided by others at home. It is not surprising then to realize that when parents are involved in their children's learning, children learn faster.

... at home PARENTS: give children support and encouragement as they 'have a go' at things. They don't expect that children will get everything right the first time around.	<u>S</u>upporting	... at school TEACHERS: provide a supportive, accepting classroom environment where the needs of individuals will be met.
understand that each of their children are different and provide lots of support as they develop in different ways.	<u>U</u>nderstanding	understand that each child is different and will need to be supported in different ways in the classroom program
care deeply about their children, watching their progress and offering praise, help, and support when it is needed.	<u>C</u>aring	respond to the needs of all children in the class. They guide and facilitate learning efforts, offer praise, constructive feedback, and support when it is needed.
talk things through with their children, listen to what they are saying and answer their questions.	<u>C</u>ommunicatio n	allow time for interaction, talking through ideas, understanding, and problems. They also make sure children believe and expect that they will succeed.
allow their children to inquire, guess, experiment, solve problems, and try things out.	<u>E</u>nquiring	provide opportunities for children to inquire and question for deeper understanding and solve problems that make sense to them.
encourage their children to talk about their feelings, experiences, and ideas and offer suggestions.	<u>S</u>haring	encourage children to discuss their ideas and how they solved problems; make suggestions on how they can develop their ideas.
praise their efforts as they attempt new things. When children are encouraged to have confidence in themselves and their own abilities, the foundations for successful learning are established.	<u>S</u>uccess	recognize and praise children's achievements no matter how small they are. They build on previous knowledge, concepts, skills, dispositions to take appropriate action.

The descriptors for children's SUCCESS for parents as well as teachers are a mirror image of each other, varying in the use of vocabulary.

Success in an IB World School is challenging for students, parents, and teachers as they develop increasing understanding of the complexities of an IB frameworks that gives meaning to the learning process. The rigor of an IB education is not the content of any school-based, national, or state curriculum. It is placing that content within an IB framework and creating meaningful connections to understand broader concepts for children's learning to transcend beyond the school to develop learning for life.

It is our intention to work and learn in tandem with parents by sharing children's achievements through the assessment and reporting program, parent programs, and conferences.

Primary Years Programme (PYP) Overview

The Primary section has an international curriculum framework based on the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP), which provides an overall philosophy and methodology from age 3 to 12 years. Our school-based curriculum is structured within this framework to provide a comprehensive and challenging education; one that helps develop a well-rounded, cultured person, with the attributes and disposition to act responsibly within the international community.



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The aim of the program is to provide opportunities for students to show that they are inquirers, thinkers, risk-takers, and communicators. It also allows them to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well balanced, and reflective.

As well as being valuable in themselves, these outcomes help students develop their awareness of local and global issues. Through the program of study, students channel the acquisition and application of knowledge into community action and service. Students are expected to demonstrate positive attitudes toward people, the environment, and learning.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile reflects the Vision and Mission of Peoria Academy. The Learner Profile aims to develop internationally-minded students who can help create a better and more peaceful world. The elements of the PYP describes the attributes and dispositions of an international person.

The Five Elements of the PYP

- 1) **Knowledge (What do we want the students to know about?):** We believe it is vital to build on students' prior knowledge base. Six transdisciplinary themes have been identified and serve as organizers for the selection of Units of Inquiry, which provide a meaningful context for learning. The organizers have specific inquiries for students to, 'inquire into.'

- **Who we are:** An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social, and spiritual health; human relationships, including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human
 - **Where we are in place and time:** An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations, and migrations of humankind; the relationships between, and the interconnectedness of, individuals and civilizations, from local to global perspectives
 - **How we express ourselves:** An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs, and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend, and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic
 - **How the world works:** An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and the environment
 - **How we organize ourselves:** An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment
 - **Sharing the planet:** An inquiry into the rights and responsibilities associated with the struggle to share finite resources with other people and living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution
- 2) **Concepts (What do we want students to learn?):** Concepts are powerful ideas that have relevance within and across many disciplines and which students must explore and re-explore in order to develop understanding; key concepts drive the inquiry that students undertake. These concepts focus the constant process of inquiry and learning that takes place in the community. These concepts are: **form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective and responsibility.** The disciplines of Mathematics, Language Arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and presenting), Social Studies, Science, The Arts (music and art), and Personal, Social, Physical Education are important knowledge that is integrated into the inquiry-based approach. Subject disciplines are only integrated if they fit naturally into the Units of Inquiry. Those areas of the subject that do not fit naturally are taught as a stand-alone (separate) component.
- 3) **Approaches to Learning (What do we want students to be able to do?):** Learning how to learn is fundamental to a student's education. The PYP has identified five categories of skills, known as the Approaches to Learning (ATLs). These five skills are: communication, thinking, social, self-management, and research. The ATLs support students of all ages in becoming self-regulated learners. Students learn how to ask good questions, set effective goals, and pursue aspirations with determination. The ATLs are developed in the context of meaningful situations through the units of inquiry and the subject-based curriculum.
- 4) **Agency in the PYP:** Agency is the power to take meaningful and intentional action, and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of the individual, supporting voice, choice and ownership for everyone in the learning community. Agency is present when students partner with teachers and members of the learning community to take charge of what, where, why, with whom and when they learn. This provides opportunities to demonstrate and reflect on knowledge, approaches to learning and attributes of the learner profile. Students with agency:
- have voice, choice and ownership; and a propensity to take action
 - influence and direct learning
 - contribute to and participate in the learning community.
- 5) **Action (How do we want the students to act?):** We develop in students a growing sense of social responsibility and the expression of that responsibility through positive action. The ability to choose wisely, act responsibly and to reflect on those choices is paramount if we are to develop responsible and respectful, life-long learners. Action is integral to PYP learning and to the programme's overarching outcome of international-mindedness. Student-initiated action will be considered a dynamic outcome of agency, and an essential part of the learning process that can arise at any time. Demonstrations of action can include:
- participation – contributing as individual or group
 - advocacy – action to support social / environmental / political change
 - social justice – relation to rights, equality and equity, social well-being and justice
 - social entrepreneurship – innovative, resourceful and sustainable social change
 - lifestyle choices – eg. consumption, impact of choices.

Inquiry-based Learning

Concept-based inquiry is the guiding approach to the PYP. Key concepts and questions drive student research. Inquiry is framed by a central idea and lines of inquiry, which are collaboratively designed by teams of teachers. Students are taught 'how to learn,' through an activity-based learning environment, where teachers are facilitators of knowledge and not the 'givers of facts,' presuming that students cannot find out or inquire for themselves. The ability for students to question and gain understanding, and then to question again in order to refine their understanding, is the heart of the inquiry process.

Kindergarten

Parents are the first and most significant educators of their children. From the moment your child is born, you have instinctively supported their learning. Children learn from the models provided by others at home. It is not surprising, then, to realize that when parents are involved in their children's learning, children learn faster. This is probably because parents have a special relationship with their children that can only be aimed for in a classroom.

The Kindergarten year is the foundation upon which all attitudes and understanding for future years will be based. Children entering Kindergarten have already had many life experiences in their families and previous school environments, which will be built upon throughout the Kindergarten year to help them establish themselves as happy and active learners. Play is the vehicle by which young children learn and its importance is considerable.

From the child's point of view, there is no division between play and work; for whatever they are doing, they are learning. Carefully planned, structured play ensures that children will encounter the learning experiences the adult intended. Through play, children practice and consolidate learning, play with ideas, and develop what they know.

Kindergarten – Grade 5 Programs

The curriculum for grades 1 – 5 is comprehensive in nature and extends and develops the qualities and abilities of each student. By using inquiry-based approaches, children can apply their knowledge and skills in practical, everyday situations. Opportunities for interaction or discussion will also be in place to utilize questioning techniques and determine what the children know/understand about concepts before planning lessons.

Throughout our educational lessons, our curriculum aims to build and support the Primary Years Program.

Areas of Learning

- Language Arts
- Spanish
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Art and Music
- Library
- Information Technology
- Physical Education

PA uses the alignment of IB Learning Outcomes for each subject to establish a continuum of learning. The purpose of learning outcomes is to identify the knowledge and skills that are necessary for each child to be successful at the next grade level.

The Exhibition

Students who are in their final year of the PYP (grade 5 students) are expected to carry out an extended, collaborative inquiry project, known as the 'exhibition', under the guidance of their teachers.

The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of both the school and student, synthesizing the essential elements of the program and sharing them with the whole school community. As a powerful demonstration of agency, the exhibition has been repositioned to reflect students' capacity to take action on an issue they have chosen to explore.

This is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the student profile that they have been developing throughout their engagement with the program. It is a culminating experience, marking the transition from the PYP to the Middle Years Programme (MYP). IB schools are given considerable flexibility in their choice of the real-life issues or problems to be explored and investigated in the exhibition.

Planning, Assessment, and Reporting

The PYP believes in the use of a range and balance of assessment strategies, designed or chosen to reflect a clear set of purposes and principles.

Student learning is promoted through planning and refining the teaching and learning process to meet individual or group needs. Assessing the students' prior knowledge and experience, as well as monitoring their achievement during teaching, will enable teachers to plan and improve their teaching accordingly. Teachers facilitate a well-designed learning experience that will provide data on students' knowledge, skills, and conceptual understanding, and is, consequently, a vehicle for summative or formative assessment.

Assessment for learning (formative) provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage of learning. It helps teachers and students find out what the students can do in the educational environment. Ongoing assessment promotes learning by providing students with consistent feedback. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to engage in thoughtful reflection, and self-assessment.

Assessment as learning provides opportunities for students to become assessment capable as they monitor and adjust using metacognitive strategies. Planning and monitoring learning goals throughout the learning process is an integral part of reflection. This allows the learner to become a self-regulated lifelong learner.

For IB learners, assessment does the following:

- Develops learner agency as students strive to reach their highest potential
- Promotes agency through self-evaluation, self-monitoring, and self-adjusting by the use of well-defined expectations and success criteria
- Communicates progress concerning what a student knows and is able to do
- Helps students develop agency as they set future goals and discuss their progress towards achieving these goals
- Connects how school relates to present world and future goals
- Offers multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency

For IB educators, assessment does the following:

- Provides data to inform learning through analysis of what students know and can do
- Creates a learner-centered environment in which teacher and student work together to track progress and identify the next steps in the learning process (support or extension)
- Helps determine effectiveness of approaches and methods
- Allows for monitoring, documenting, measuring and reporting on learning

For administrators, assessment does the following:

- Assists in determining the effectiveness of programs and attainment of learning goals
- Assists in allocation of resources, including professional development
- Evaluate the depth of curriculum and the effectiveness of instruction

For parents, assessment does the following:

- Provides data about student learning and attainment
- Helps provide information of the strengths and weaknesses of individual learner
- Extends their child's understanding by supporting learning in real-world contexts

PYP Reporting Process

According to the IB, there are four components of assessment in the Primary Years Programme. Teachers are responsible for: monitoring learning, documenting learning, measuring learning, and reporting on learning. The reporting process focuses on measuring and reporting on learning.

- **Measuring Learning:** captures what a student has learned during a specific point in time; supports student achievement and progress in learning; and provides analysis of data points to evaluate student progress
- **Reporting on Learning:** informs parents and students on progress made towards achievement; identifies areas of growth

Reporting

The PYP implements a K—5 report card that aligns with the International Baccalaureate’s stance on measuring and reporting on learning. This provides consistency across the PYP classrooms. PYP reports are issued at the conclusion of a 9-week period, dividing the length of the school year into four quarters:

Quarterly reports will be made available at the end of each nine-week period			
Quarter One (Q1): October	Quarter Two (Q2): January	Quarter Three (Q3): March	Quarter Four (Q4): June

Mastery Levels

On the quarter report card, parents and students will clearly see what was taught during the nine-week grading period and the degree to which the learner has mastered the taught curriculum. This will allow for enriched conversations with the teacher as all stakeholders clearly understand what grade level standards need to be targeted for growth and what standards have been mastered. Students will be able to use the reporting process to set specific goals to work toward mastery.

Primary Years Programme Student Mastery Levels			
IA	DA	AA	IP
Independent Application of Standard to New Situations	Demonstrates Achievement of Standard (<i>the goal is for students to reach this level</i>)	Approaching achievement of Standard with Support	Insufficient Progress Toward Standard
Correlation to the Assessment Tools Used in PYP Classrooms			
<i>Child-friendly mastery levels used in instruction</i>			
I can teach someone	I can do this by myself	I need help	I don't understand

Peoria Academy ATL rubric for PYP			
Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations

PYP Homework

All students in grades 1-5 have scheduled homework, and the amount and content is dependent upon the student’s abilities. Students are to use a PYP Homework Planner (electronic or paper format) to record homework given, date given and completed, as well as other important information and reminders.

Teachers will communicate to parents, and we ask that a reciprocal exchange take place to maintain positive home-school relations. Homework is an important component of a child’s education at Peoria Academy. Homework provides an opportunity for a student to reinforce concepts and practice skills, thus enriching their in-school program of studies. In addition, it serves as a valuable means of communication between home and school about a child’s progress.

Homework should:

- Reinforce and support a child's in-school experience
- Promote self-discipline, organization, and effective study habits
- Promote positive attitudes towards independent and life-long learning
- Provide parents with insights into their child's development and learning experiences, and invite their involvement in an appropriate way

Students are responsible for:

- Completing assignments on-time and appropriately
- Asking for assistance from the teacher if the assignment is not understood
- Developing a homework routine
- Asking for assistance, if needed, after attempting to complete an assignment independently

Teachers are responsible for:

- Providing a range of relevant and meaningful assignments during the school year
- Modifying expectations when necessary to meet the needs of individual students
- Reviewing homework so that student learning is enhanced
- Ensuring that assignments are understood by students
- Encouraging students to seek assistance when necessary
- Maintaining effective communication with parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing students with the time, materials, and facilities for work at home
- Assisting students to develop a homework routine
- Ensuring that students work on their assignments
- Encouraging effort, achievement, and a positive attitude towards homework
- Maintaining effective communication with teachers

Assignments may include:

- Review, extension, or application of work taught in class
- Completion of unfinished class work
- Book reviews/reports
- Collection of materials and/or information for class
- Independent research, reports, and projects
- Student reflection

The PYP philosophy emphasizes the IB Learner Profile attributes. Homework is given to motivate and reinforce good study habits, commitment, confidence, and independence. The responsibility for homework rests with the student; however, it is also a responsibility of the teacher and parents to provide a routine and structure to motivate the students to complete homework enthusiastically and with pride.

Parents are able to refer to the teacher website, or electronic communication tool for communication between home and school. Communications serve to inform both student and parent of the learning objective or outcomes desired for the homework. Student success at Peoria Academy is achieved by all of us working together.

We must also be more diligent with our consequences at school for those students who habitually do not hand in their homework to their teacher. Therefore, we will enforce our current policies - if and when necessary. The policy on homework is in this handbook, along with the expectations of teachers, students, and parents.

Reading for Pleasure

We expect that all children will experience at least 10-20 minutes of uninterrupted reading at home each day. The amount of time given will be dependent on the age and ability level of students. We ask that parents read to and with their children, irrespective of the grade level. Parents who need assistance with book selection can speak to the librarian and/or their child's classroom teacher.

Middle Years Programme (MYP) Overview

PA delivers the MYP in Grades 6 through 8. The MYP helps students develop critical thinking skills, become independent, work collaboratively, and take a disciplined approach to academic endeavors. The MYP also seeks to provide students with an international perspective and to foster a commitment to service.

In the MYP, students study eight subject groups:

- Language and Literature
- Language Acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Sciences
- Mathematics
- Arts
- Design
- Physical and Health Education



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Conceptual Learning

In the MYP curriculum framework, students engage with a defined set of key and related concepts. The exploration of concepts leads students toward a deeper understanding of the subject group, appreciation of ideas that transcend disciplinary boundaries, and engagement with complex ideas, including the ability to transfer and apply ideas and skills to new situations.

Global Contexts

The six global contexts provide the starting points for inquiry into what it means to be internationally minded, framing a curriculum that promotes multilingualism, intercultural understanding, and global engagement. The global contexts provide common perspectives within and across the disciplines and ground the studies in real world contexts.

The MYP identifies six global contexts for teaching and learning that are developed from and extend the PYP's transdisciplinary themes. They are:

PYP Transdisciplinary Theme	MYP Global Context
Who we are	Identities and Relationships

Where we are in place and time	Orientation in Space and Time
How we express ourselves	Personal and Cultural Expression
How the world works	Scientific and Technical Expression
How we organize ourselves	Globalization and Sustainability
Sharing the planet	Fairness and Development

MYP Service as Action

The MYP service requirements encourage students to build authentic connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in the community. All MYP students are expected to engage in meaningful service activities in which they work with others in a shared commitment towards the common good. Through service as action, students should:

- become more aware of their own strengths and areas for growth;
- undertake challenges that develop new skills;
- discuss, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities;
- persevere in action;
- work collaboratively with others;
- develop international mindedness through global engagement, multilingualism, and intercultural understanding; and
- consider the ethical implications of their actions.

In order to encourage meaningful and authentic service, MYP students will be held accountable through a leveled system for their service experiences, rather than through simply counting hours.

MYP Community Project

In schools where MYP finishes with year 3 or 4 of the programme, all students in their final year must complete the community project. The IB Community Project is a major activity for students to complete in their 8th Grade year at Peoria Academy.

The community project focuses on community and service, encouraging students to explore their right and responsibility to implement service as action in the community. The community project gives students an opportunity to develop awareness of needs in various communities and address those needs through service learning. The community project can be completed individually or collaboratively in groups of a maximum of three students. The choice of the goal or topic for the project is made in consultation with the Community Project Coordinator, who has the responsibility of supervising the development of the project according to the MYP Community Project Assessment Criteria. The aims of the MYP Community Project are to encourage and enable students to:

- participate in a sustained, self-directed inquiry within a global context;
- generate creative new insights and develop deeper understandings through in-depth investigation;
- demonstrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to complete a project over an extended period of time;
- communicate effectively in a variety of situations;
- demonstrate responsible action through, or as a result of, learning; and
- appreciate the process of learning and take pride in their accomplishments.

MYP STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Assessment in the MYP is criterion-related, reflecting contemporary educational theory regarding assessment. Each subject in the MYP has its own assessment criteria that are age, level, task specific, and based on core learning aims and

objectives for that subject. In recent years, educational assessment has moved away from comparing a student's achievement against other students because this normative model for assessment provided students with continuously negative perceptions about learning.

In contrast, the use of criterion-related assessment:

- Compares student achievement with predetermined criteria that, over time, provides greater consistency in maintaining and raising standards.
- This method of student assessment helps learners plan their next steps for learning and set goals for improvement.

What should grades tell us about students?

- What a student knows and can do
- How well a student can apply what they know
- What level of student work is at compared to a specific rubric, standard, or goal
- How well a student can apply their learning to real world situations
- What their strengths are and also areas that need further attention
- Whether they have improved during the marking period

Knowledge and skills are assessed through the following criteria specifically designed for each subject. These form the basis of student reporting and are translated to the 1-7 overall achievement levels at the end of each semester. These scores will be assessed as a way to chart the academic performance of students in the MYP.

In order to accurately determine student progress, a variety of measures will be utilized to test student knowledge and educational attainment throughout the year. In MYP courses, a student will be administered a minimum of two (2) summative assessments per quarter. Students may reassess one summative per semester, per course. There will also be many formative assessments throughout the semester. These tend to be quizzes, exit tickets, homework assignments, etc. Formatives may be reported using a percent scale and cannot be re-assessed, but they should prepare students for summative assessments while also factoring into the overall semester grade.

Criterion-related assessment

The MYP assessment model is described as **criterion-related**. It is based upon predetermined criteria to which all students have access. The MYP identifies a set of objectives for each subject group, which are directly related to the assessment criteria of that particular group. The level of student success in reaching the objectives of each subject group is measured in terms of **levels of achievement**, described in each assessment criterion. The kind of generic application of broadly constructed criteria that is used in MYP assessment practices is called “**criterion-related**” assessment. This differs from the term criterion-referenced assessment in that it does not require a mastery of each descriptor and better describes the MYP “best-fit” approach.

MYP criteria

Each of the subjects in MYP has specific criteria that students are expected to meet. All MYP subjects have four criteria which align with the objectives. These are described in the teachers' course outlines. Teachers use a variety of assessment tasks to determine a student's achievement level for each of the course's criteria. Throughout the year, students will be assessed numerous times for each criterion. This will give teachers a strong measurement of student understanding. The weight of each criterion and the grade levels are determined by the IB.

For Grades 6-8:

For example, Mathematics has four criteria, each worth a maximum of 8 marks:

Criterion A	Knowing and Understanding	8
Criterion B	Investigating Patterns	8
Criterion C	Communicating	8

Criterion D	Applying Mathematics in Real-life Contexts	8
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Final subject grades are determined by taking the aggregate grade of an MYP subject's criterion scores and then using the IB grade boundaries to determine the student's final grade.

For example, a student received the following levels achievement in Mathematics:

A – Knowing and Understanding:	7 (out of 8)
B – Investigating Patterns:	7 (out of 8)
C – Communicating:	6 (out of 8)
D – Applying Mathematics in Real Life Contexts:	5 (out of 8)
TOTAL:	25

According to the grade boundaries, this gives the student in Mathematics a grade of a “6”. This then converts to a 90% pursuant to the Grade Boundaries and Conversion Table for Grades 6 - 8 located below. It should be noted that a mark of a 6 is **NOT** 6/7 (or 86%). The number represents an overall description of performance, which can be found on the grade descriptor sheet.

Grades 6-8 Criterion Grade Boundaries and Conversion Table for Calculating Grade at End of Semester.

At the end of the semester, the four (4) criterion grades for each subject will be added together to get a score out of 32. This score will determine the student's overall performance in the subject on the 1—7 scale below. The raw score also corresponds to a percentage grade.

Semester Grade Boundaries	Criterion based boundaries	Grade Descriptor
1 (1-5)	1 2 3 4 5	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and skills. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2 (6-9)	6 7 8 9	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
3 (10-14)	10 11 12 13 14	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates a basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
4 (15-18)	15 16 17 18	Produces good quality work. Communicates a basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations but requires support in unfamiliar situations.

5 (19-23)	19 20 21 22 23	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates a reliable understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations, and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
6 (24-27)	24 25 26 27	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates an extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
7 (28-32)	28 29 30 31 32	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work, Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.

ACADEMICS

Student Tenure Policy

Successful completion of the current academic year and recommendation of the faculty are required for the re-enrollment of currently enrolled students. Upon acceptance of a contract, the school makes a commitment to the student for the entire year. However, in those instances where a student is failing to meet minimal standards for satisfactory academic work and/or acceptable behavior, or when a constructive relationship between the school, the student, and the student's family is no longer sustainable, the school reserves the right to assist in a transfer to another school.

In cases where the student shows a clear lack of academic progress and/or responsible citizenship, the school will implement procedures (jointly with the faculty, the parents, and the student) to alleviate the problem and return the student to a path of productive learning. The school may require a student to curtail some extracurricular activities if such activities interfere with his/her academic performance.

Documentation of academic difficulty or disciplinary problems are shared with the parents through behavior reports, conferences, letters, or written communications. The school may, at its discretion, issue a provisional contract for academic or behavioral reasons when it is deemed to be in the best interests of the student or the school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are held at the end of the first and third quarters. Registration for the conferences is available at least one week prior to the conferences. At Parent/Teacher conferences, parents will have the opportunity to review a child's latest progress reports.

All parents are encouraged to participate in the Parent-Teacher conferences during the scheduled time. Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference whenever they have a concern about their child's progress at school. Whether it be homework concerns, problems with a classmate, or general concerns about the child's performance, parents are asked to discuss their concerns directly with the child's teacher or the school administration. As a courtesy, please schedule a mutually agreeable time with the teacher so that he/she can best devote full attention to your concerns.

Special Needs

If accepted into the school, the Principal will determine the level of accommodation that the school can provide for students with special needs. In order to receive accommodations, evaluations may be required. Additional remediation may be provided at the parents' expense.

Homework

Students at Peoria Academy experience full days of academics, extracurriculars and athletics. We wish for all students to be able to take full advantage of these offerings, and some students will be engaged in our enriching programming from 7:15 AM until 5:15 PM.

When students get home they should have time for family, relaxation and recharging. They will also be expected to:

- Read at home. Our expectations for reading begin with approximately 15 minutes of nightly story time and reading in the lower school, and will regularly include fiction and non-fiction selections moving through to the middle school.
- Practice math concepts: Students reinforce their understanding of mathematical concepts and operations through regular practice. This is not to regularly exceed 20 minutes per night. After 20 minutes of practice, families are encouraged to make a note of where they are stopping. If students are regularly unable to finish their math practice in the allotted time, families should reach out to their teachers for additional accommodations or support.
- Review Take-home Folders, planners, and Toddle - Lower school teachers regularly send take-home folders including choice activities, extension materials, suggestions for enrichment etc. Upper elementary and middle

school students should make a habit of reviewing their planners to make sure they are prepared for upcoming assignments.

- **Finish projects:** Some extended projects will require work at home for successful completion. For example, a student may need to put the finishing touches on a science fair project over a weekend or rehearse their opening speech for a debate the night before.

Late or Missing Work

To optimize access to learning, all student assignments/homework are required to be submitted on time and in the requested format to the appropriate teacher. Student assignments include not only items to be assessed and recorded in the teacher's gradebook, but any work that a teacher assigns whether officially assessed or not. Late work, missing work, and work not submitted according to guidelines and dates by the teacher are considered code of conduct violations and will initially be dealt with using the following proceedings:

- If a student does not turn in an assignment, the teacher will conference with the student.
- If the work is not turned in after the first contact, the teacher will notify the parents so they may partner in the students' education.

Student Grade Level

In rare circumstances, it may be determined that it is in the best interest of a student to either retain them in the same grade level or to promote them to a level higher. This decision will only be made after much consideration, feedback, and data analysis. The multi-step process will involve the parents of the student, the students' teachers, Principal, and the Executive Director. The administration reserves the right to make a final determination about the grade level placement of any student.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

If the school administration determines that a student is not making adequate academic progress he/she may be placed on academic probation. Meetings may be held between the student, his or her teacher, parents, Principal, and, when necessary, the Executive Director. Goals will be set for the remainder of the school year as well as for re-admission for the following fall semester. If the goals of the probationary period are not achieved, the school may require that the family seek a learning environment better suited to the student's needs.

Graduation Requirements

Any student who graduates from Peoria Academy will be known to have completed an academic program of the highest standards, an academic program that has prepared him/her to be successful at any secondary school he/she may attend. A Peoria Academy graduate will have successfully completed 8th grade and met the following requirements during their 8th grade year:

- Graduates will have demonstrated adequate levels of academic achievement as determined by the Peoria Academy administration;
- Graduates will have passed both the Illinois and U.S. Constitution tests;
- Graduates will have met and **maintained the behavior standards** expected by Peoria Academy and outlined in the Student Handbook;
- Graduates will have met and **maintained the attendance standards** expected by Peoria Academy and outlined in this handbook;
- Graduates and/or his/her family will have **met all financial obligations** to the school.

The administration will reserve the right to make a final determination about the eligibility of any student to graduate from Peoria Academy.

CODE OF CONDUCT

It is expected that all members of the Peoria Academy school community will conduct themselves with the highest degree of professionalism in any and all interactions and relationships with students, peers, parents and the public. All members of the school community are expected to follow Peoria Academy's four basic rules of conduct: **Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Prepared.**

Behavioral Expectations

- Appropriate, respectful language is to be used at all times. Verbal abuse, tasteless language, malicious or insensitive remarks made to any other person designed to harass, intimidate, or provoke are not allowed. A sense of security is critical to the atmosphere at Peoria Academy. Threatening to hurt someone, rough-housing, or fighting is not allowed and may result in serious disciplinary action. Weapons or potentially harmful items such as matches, firecrackers, jackknives, knives (even toy knives), guns (even toy guns), or sharp pointed objects are not permitted; more importantly, bringing them to school will incur serious disciplinary consequences. Students who have questions concerning personal items that may be permitted are to contact the administration office for clarification before bringing the questionable item to school.
- Everyone must respect the property of others. Destroying or stealing property belonging to the school or other individuals, defacing the furniture or walls is not permitted. Families of students will be held responsible for the cost of damaged or stolen property.
- Students must be respectful of their teacher's and classmate's time. Students are to arrive to their classes on time. Arriving to class late is disruptive to the entire class.
- As responsible citizens of the school community, students will complete their homework and return it to the teacher on time.
- Students are expected to be prepared for their classes, with appropriate books, paper, pens/pencils for class.
- The possession or use of non-prescribed drugs, alcoholic beverages, smoking or drug paraphernalia is not allowed.
- Students are expected to remain on school property until they are picked up by a parent or guardian.

Parent Communication

Any and all conversation with a teacher should be limited to addressing issues with your child. A teacher is not permitted to discuss anything concerning any other child – grades, behaviors, test scores, medical information, family history, etc. – with another parent. Peoria Academy employees are not permitted to discuss personnel issues. Concerns regarding incidents occurring on school property or related directly to Peoria Academy should be brought to the school administration's attention immediately. Any questions or concerns about another teacher, the administration, or any other school staff or personnel should be directed to the Principal.

Discipline Philosophy

Peoria Academy makes every effort to recognize good student behavior and the appropriate implementation of discipline that creates learning opportunities for all students. Peoria Academy uses restorative justice as its main mechanism to deal with inappropriate behavior. This approach to discipline focuses on relationships and reconciliation. The restorative justice approach focuses specifically on the damage done to the relationship and includes both parties in the accountability, healing, and growth.

Consequences for Offenses:

Our discipline system has three levels: Minor (write-up), Moderate (violation), and Severe (referral). Severe offenses always result in a referral being filed in the student's permanent school record. Referrals do not expire and remain in the student's record for their entire tenure at Peoria Academy.

Parents will be notified each time a student has an incident. Additionally, moderate offenses will warrant a written notice to parents requiring signatures from the teacher, administration, and the parent.

Academic Council

If a student receives a second referral, an Academic Council will be formed to evaluate the student's ability to continue with the school. The Academic Council will be formed by the Executive Director with persons as they deem appropriate for the matter. The student's parents may write a letter on behalf of their child and submit this to the Academic Council. The Academic Council will review the incident and the student's record. A recommendation by the Academic Council will be given to the Executive Director within 10 days of the referral. During this waiting period, the student may be suspended from school at the discretion of the Executive Director. A final decision regarding the student's continued enrollment in Peoria Academy will be made by the Executive Director as soon as the recommendation by the Academic Council has been reviewed.

Bullying

Bullying is not acceptable behavior at Peoria Academy, and as such will not be tolerated. We believe that no one has the right to do or say anything that may negatively impact the educational opportunities or the physical and/or emotional well-being of any other student. The State of Illinois defines "bullying", including "cyber-bullying", as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school (as defined in Public Act 098-0669)

The following behaviors are examples of some, but certainly not all, forms of bullying:

- Telling or forcing another person to do something against his/her will;
- Making another person give up his/her lunch, place in line, or material possessions;
- Threatening some kind of retaliation (physical harm or withdrawal of friendship) if a person doesn't comply with the bully's request;
- Repeated acts of physical aggression upon another person (tripping, hitting, poking, pushing);
- The spread of gossip, rumors and lies to hurt another person;
- Teasing, mocking, and taunting a peer.

School's Responsibility in Bullying

First and foremost, Peoria Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive atmosphere for every student. When bullying is thought to occur, we will take prompt, strong action in dealing with any and all aspects of such situations. Students who cannot or will not abide by school rules and policies will be separated from the school. Bullying is

contrary to State law (Public Acts 98-0669 and 98-0801) and school policy. Peoria Academy will determine whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction and shall require that the school provides services to those students being bullied.

Peoria Academy believes that re-education, rather than just punishment, is the appropriate way to deal with bullying behaviors. To that end, the administration and the faculty will make every effort to work with both the bully and the victim. The administration will assist in preventing bullying behaviors and to minimize the risk of being bullied. **However, Peoria Academy can and will take whatever steps necessary to protect the rights and the well-being of students and/or staff. Students who engage in acts of bullying may be subject to disciplinary actions which may include verbal or written reprimand, detention, in-school suspension, and/or out of school suspension or expulsion.**

Investigating Bullying:

- Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.
- Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.
- Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.
- Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.
- If necessary, we will provide information to parties about local services (including social work, psychological services, etc.)

“Cyber-bullying” (using electronic means to bully another student), and using school computers to do so, will be subject to the same rules and procedures as physical, verbal and/or emotional bullying. If the behavior occurs after school hours or over the Internet, the parent should call the other child's parents to inform them of the incident. If a child receives inappropriate email or other electronic communications, the parents should keep a copy to show the bully's parents. Parents should inform their child's teacher and the administration of the incident so that school authorities can take appropriate action. Because it has an impact on students' daily interactions inside school, we will treat any cyber-bullying as a school matter.

Victims of Bullying:

Whenever a student believes that he/she is being bullied, he/she must go to any teacher or school official to tell of his/her experience as soon as possible. Failure to report such incidents delays the school's efforts to deal with the problem. Any issue involving bullying must be reported as soon as possible, either by the victim of bullying, by the victim's parents, or by another student who has witnessed the event. We encourage any student to come forward and report incidents to his/her teacher or to the administration. At Peoria Academy, anyone who silently witnesses an event and does nothing is also considered part of the problem. Conversely, false reporting of a bullying behavior is considered to be another form of bullying. Retaliations or reprisals against those reporting bullying will not be tolerated. As such, these actions may result in the same graduated sanction scale as above.

The Victim's Parents:

If/when a parent believes that some sort of bullying is affecting his/her child, the parent must:

- report the incident to the school immediately;
- realize that resolving the problem permanently may take some time;
- ask the school to keep an extra watchful eye on the child.

The Bully's Parents:

When a parent has been notified that his/her child has been engaging in behavior that is considered bullying, it is expected that:

- Parents will make it clear to their child that such behavior is unacceptable;
- Parents will work with the school administration and the students involved to help resolve the situation. Parents should be aware that continued bullying behaviors may result in suspension and/or permanent expulsion from Peoria Academy.

Harassment

Peoria Academy believes that all people deserve to be treated in a respectful manner. No person, including students, parents, visitors and Peoria Academy employees, shall harass or intimidate a student, another parent, visitors, and/or Peoria Academy employees based upon that individual's sex, color, race, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, physical or learning disability, or sexual orientation. The school will not tolerate harassing or intimidating conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that unreasonably interferes with a student's educational opportunity/performance or that creates a hostile or offensive learning environment. Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, or wearing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice. Any conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort is not acceptable.

Sexual harassment of students, faculty and staff, and parents is prohibited. Any person engages in sexual harassment whenever he or she makes sexual advances, requests sexual favors, and involves any conduct that has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing and/or spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities. Any sexual harassment that may occur from student to student, from teacher to student, from student to teacher, from parent to student, from student to parent, from teacher to parent, from parent to teacher, from employer to employee, or from employee to employer cannot and will not be tolerated.

Students who believe they are victims of any form of harassment, or have witnessed harassment, should make a complaint to a faculty member, Principal, or the Executive Director. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined. Any student who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the school. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the school.

All policies regarding bullying and harassment will be evaluated yearly and modified, as needed, to best meet state law and promote a safe

HEALTH

Medication

Medication should be given to the child, by the parent, either before or after school hours. In exceptional cases, medication may be brought to the school office by the parent, accompanied by a signed and dated Medication Instruction/Release Form. The medication must be in a pharmacy container with the child's name and valid date on the label. The school assumes no responsibility for administration of medication. Because the school does not have a nurse on staff, the school reserves the right to refuse to administer any medication at the discretion of the Executive Director. Over-the-counter drugs will be administered only with a Medication Release Form on file in the office. A student should not have medication on his/her person or in a storage area assigned to him/her, unless carrying an inhaler. In the case of a student carrying his/her inhaler on his/her person, he/she must have the proper release form filled out in the office.

Peoria Academy has adopted a policy for the administration of a medical cannabis infused product to a student who is a registered qualifying patient. The policy/procedures allow a parent or guardian or other designated caregiver to administer the product subject to the restrictions outlined in 105 ILCS 5/22-23. The policy/procedures allow for a school administrator or school nurse to administer the product and may also allow a student who is a registered qualifying patient to self-administer the product under the supervision of a school administrator or school nurse, subject to the restrictions outlined in 105 ILCS 5/22-33.

Injuries at School

The parents of Peoria Academy acknowledge that no trained medical or nursing personnel are on the school staff. For something more than minor injuries, parents will be notified either by phone or upon pick up from school. All injuries to the head or neck will be reported to parents independent of the severity of the injury. In addition, the school may complete an accident report. Emergency assistance and/or transportation may be requested at the discretion of the Executive Director or his/her designee. Students must report injuries immediately to faculty or staff.

Concussion Protocol

Return to Play Policy for Middle School Athletics at Peoria Academy

Concussion Awareness and Management:

At Peoria Academy, the safety and well-being of our students are our top priorities. Recognizing the severity of concussions and their potential impact on young athletes, we adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) regarding the recognition, management, and return to play after a concussion.

Understanding Concussions:

A concussion is a type of brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that transmits force to the head. Even seemingly mild concussions are serious and can lead to complications if not managed properly. It's essential to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion, which may not always include loss of consciousness but can manifest as various physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes.

Signs and Symptoms:

Signs and symptoms of a concussion may appear immediately after the injury or take hours or days to manifest. These include headaches, nausea, dizziness, confusion, changes in behavior, and more. It's crucial for athletes, parents, coaches, and teammates to be vigilant in recognizing these signs and symptoms.

Immediate Action:

If a concussion is suspected, the athlete must be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with a concussion can lead to further injury and complications, including prolonged recovery and severe brain swelling. Education and awareness among administrators, coaches, parents, and students are essential for ensuring the safety of student-athletes.

Return to Play Protocol:

No athlete may return to play or practice after a suspected concussion without medical clearance from a licensed physician or certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician. Close observation of the athlete should

continue for several hours after the injury. The Return-to-Play Policy outlined by the IESA requires written clearance before resuming athletic activities.

School Compliance:

Peoria Academy follows the IESA and Illinois High School Association (IHSA) guidelines regarding concussion management. As per state law, all schools are required to adhere to these protocols to ensure the safety of student-athletes.

Parental Responsibility:

Parents are urged to inform their child's coach immediately if they suspect a concussion. It's essential to prioritize the athlete's health and well-being over athletic participation. When in doubt, it's better to err on the side of caution and allow the athlete to rest and recover fully before returning to play.

At Peoria Academy, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for our student-athletes. By following proper concussion protocols and prioritizing athlete safety, we aim to mitigate the risks associated with sports-related head injuries and ensure the long-term health and well-being of our students.

Return to Learn Policy for Middle School Students at Peoria Academy

Concussion Management and Academic Support:

At Peoria Academy, we recognize that returning to academic activities after a concussion requires careful consideration and support to ensure the well-being and academic success of our students. Our Return to Learn Policy outlines the steps and accommodations necessary to facilitate a smooth transition back to the classroom following a concussion.

Initial Assessment:

Upon notification of a student's concussion, our school's designated staff will conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity of the concussion and identify any immediate academic accommodations needed. This assessment may include consultation with medical professionals and communication with parents or guardians.

Academic Accommodations:

Based on the assessment and recommendations from medical professionals, appropriate academic accommodations will be provided to support the student's recovery and ensure their academic progress is not compromised. These accommodations may include:

1. Modified workload or assignments to reduce cognitive strain.
2. Extended time for completing assignments or assessments.
3. Flexible deadlines for homework or projects.
4. Alternative methods of instruction or assessment, such as audio recordings or oral presentations.
5. Temporary exemption from certain activities or classes that may exacerbate symptoms.

Gradual Return to Learning:

Students will follow a gradual return-to-learn protocol, starting with light cognitive activities and gradually increasing their academic workload as tolerated. This approach allows students to ease back into their studies while monitoring their symptoms and ensuring they do not experience cognitive overload.

Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication between school staff, parents, medical professionals, and the student is essential throughout the recovery process. Regular updates on the student's progress and any changes in symptoms will be shared to ensure a coordinated approach to their academic support and well-being.

Monitoring and Adjustment:

The Return to Learn Policy will be continuously monitored and adjusted as needed to meet the individual needs of each student recovering from a concussion. Flexibility and responsiveness to the student's progress and changing symptoms are paramount in facilitating a successful return to academic activities.

Student Education and Awareness:

Peoria Academy will provide education and awareness programs to students, parents, and staff members to promote understanding of concussions, their impact on learning, and the importance of proper management and support during the recovery process.

Conclusion:

By implementing our Return to Learn Policy, Peoria Academy is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students recovering from concussions can receive the necessary accommodations and support to continue their academic journey safely and successfully. We prioritize the health, well-being, and academic success of all our students, and we will work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition back to learning following a concussion.

Medical and Dental Appointments

A student may be excused for medical, dental, and personal appointments when such appointments cannot be scheduled during non-school hours. Parents are required to notify the homeroom teacher in writing whenever it is necessary for a student to be absent or excused for such reasons. When picking up a child in the middle of the school day, parents must check in at the office. To minimize disruptions to the class, the office will call the classroom to excuse the child from class.

Illness

While encouraging good attendance, Peoria Academy recognizes that the welfare of all students must be considered. Therefore, students who have a fever, have been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours, have been physically ill within 24 hours, or are just recovering from an illness should remain at home until they have been symptom free for a 24 hour period. Parents may be contacted and expected to promptly pick up students who are ill. It is essential that parents keep updated home, work, and emergency telephone numbers at school.

A child who is returning to school after an illness or an injury may be excused from recess and/or physical education classes for up to two days with a parent's written request. If a child is to miss recess and/or physical education classes for longer than two days, a doctor's note to that effect will be required. If your child is complaining day after day of headaches or stomach aches that you believe to be imagined, please contact your child's teacher to talk about these concerns and we will try to find the cause.

For each day a student misses school, he/she receives one day to make up the work (this includes tests/quizzes). For example, if a child misses school on Wednesday, they have one day to make up their work. The assignments missed on Wednesday will be due on Friday. In the middle school, assignments are posted online.

If a child misses school due to illness, he/she must be at school by 12:30 PM in order to participate in an after school activity or performance.

Required Documentation*Physical and Dental Exams and Immunizations*

Illinois State Law requires physical examinations and immunizations for all students prior to entering Early Childhood, Kindergarten, and Sixth grade. By law, students are excluded from school after October 15th if these requirements are not met. Current dental exams are required by Illinois State Law for all children in grades K, 2nd and 6th grades. Vision Screening is required by state law for all students entering Kindergarten or students transferring to Peoria Academy from another school. Please review the Health Record Requirements sheet for more specific information.

Birth Certificates

The Illinois State Law requires that all students have a copy of their birth certificate on file at school.

SAFETY

Fire, Tornado, and Safety Drills

Fire drills and procedures are supervised by the Peoria Fire Department. Tornado emergency procedures and fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and have been approved by the Peoria Fire Department. Regular fire, tornado, bus evacuation, and lockdown drills are conducted by the school. In the case of an actual building emergency, an alternate student pick-up location will be communicated at that time.

Weather Policy

Children will be outdoors for recess whenever possible. On days when the wind chill is 20 degrees or colder, the heat index exceeds 95 degrees, or there is inclement weather, the children may have an indoor recess. Otherwise, students will be expected to go outdoors and should dress accordingly.

TECHNOLOGY

Users of the Peoria Academy computing services are expected to abide by the following policies. Our policies are intended to preserve the utility and flexibility of the system, to protect the work of students, faculty, and staff, and to preserve the right to access the internet.

Cell Phone/Wearable Technology Use

Peoria Academy encourages students to leave their digital communication devices at home. Students who need cell phones or wearable technology after they leave campus must store these devices, powered off and in their lockers, while they are on campus including before care, recess, lunch periods, restroom breaks, and after care. Students in violation of this rule will have their devices confiscated. The devices will be held in the office and returned when a parent comes to the school office to claim it. Repeated violations of this rule will result in further disciplinary actions.

Parents must not call the student's cell phone/wearable or send text messages to their child at any time throughout the day. Any/all communications between a student and his/her parents must be made through the school office, with the permission of school personnel. Students who need to contact their parents must use the school's telephone. Peoria Academy will assume no responsibility or liability for any cell phone/wearable that is lost, stolen, damaged, or misused.

Electronic Items

Electronic devices (hand-held computer game systems, recorders, etc.) should not be brought to or used at school, unless students have been expressly invited to do so by a teacher. Peoria Academy will assume no responsibility or liability for any electronic device that is lost, stolen, damaged, or misused.

A. Internet Uses and Behavior

Peoria Academy provides access to its computer network and the internet for educational purposes only. Students should ask a teacher or administrator if they question the appropriateness of an internet activity, site, or resource. Peoria Academy recognizes that online based instruction may expand course offerings not currently available. Credit will be granted only for courses that have been approved by the school in advance and when requirements have been outlined with a teacher prior to registration of the course.

B. Netiquette (Online Etiquette)

All students must abide by rules of network etiquette, which include the following:

- Being polite.
- Using appropriate language. No vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening language. Avoid language that is offensive to other users. Distributing jokes, stories, or other material which is based upon slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation is prohibited.
- Asking permission. Forwarding email or materials without permission of the sender is prohibited.
- Being considerate when sending attachments. Be sure that a file is not too large to be accommodated by the recipient's system and is in a format that the recipient can open.

C. Unacceptable Uses of the Internet and Computers

The following are among the uses considered unacceptable and a violation of this policy.

- 1) Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law. Students may not:
 - plagiarize works found on the Internet;
 - transmit offensive or harassing messages;
 - view, transmit, or download pornographic materials or materials that encourage others to violate the law;
 - intrude into the networks or computers of others; or,

- download or transmit confidential, trade secret information, or copyrighted materials. Students should assume that all materials are copyrighted unless explicit permission is given to use them.
- 2) Uses that cause harm to others or damage to their property.
 - engaging in defamation (harming another's reputation by lies);
 - using another's password or some other user identifier that misleads message recipients into believing that someone other than the student is communicating or otherwise using his/her access to the network or the Internet;
 - uploading a worm, virus, trojan, key logger or other harmful form of programming or vandalism;
 - participate in "hacking" activities or any form of unauthorized access to other computers, networks, or information systems.
 - 3) Uses that jeopardize the security of student access and of the computer network or other networks on the Internet.
 - disclosing or sharing their password with others;
 - impersonating another student or member of the school.
 - 4) Uses that are commercial transactions.
 - selling or buying anything over the Internet.
 - disclosing private information about themselves or others, including credit card numbers and social security numbers.
 - 5) Uses for the purposes of campaigning and/or lobbying.
 - 6) Uses of Peoria Academy organizational email addresses for external websites including but not limited to social media, message boards etc. Please note that teachers will explicitly approve the use of Peoria Academy organizational email addresses as log-in credentials for sites that have an educational purpose in line with our curriculum.

D. Social Media

- 1) Peoria Academy may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information to gain access to the student's social account or profile on a social networking site.
- 2) Peoria Academy may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and,
- 3) Peoria Academy may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

Privacy

Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for educational purposes. Peoria Academy reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the Peoria Academy and no student shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

Compliance

A student who violates the Peoria Academy's internet policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Warranties

Peoria Academy makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, in connection with its provision of access to and use of its computer networks and the Internet provided under this policy. It shall not be responsible for any claims, losses, damages or costs (including attorney's fees) of any kind suffered, directly or indirectly, by any student or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) arising out of the student's use of its computer networks or the Internet under this policy. By signing the agreement, students are taking full responsibility for his or her use and the parent(s) or guardian(s) are agreeing to indemnify and hold the school, Peoria Academy, and all of administrators, teachers, and staff harmless from any and all losses, costs, claims or damages resulting from the student's access to its computer network and the Internet, including but not limited to any fees or charges incurred through purchases of goods or services by the student. The student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) agree to cooperate with the school in the event of the school initiating an investigation of a student's use of his or her access to its computer network and the Internet, whether that use is on a school device.

Appendix A - Artificial Intelligence Policy

Peoria Academy embraces the opportunity to share a position* on the role of Artificial Intelligence in education and at Peoria Academy specifically.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) School, we are conscious that the IB does not have a public position on the use of generative AI in schools. However, the IB does expect schools to maintain positions and policies regarding academic integrity and appropriate use of technology in a school's pedagogy and curriculum.

Peoria Academy (PA) believes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will become a part of our everyday lives, and that we need to adapt our educational programs and assessment practices accordingly. Peoria Academy intends to work with faculty and students to define appropriate use of AI, provide training and guidance as necessary, and to work to embrace the positive outcomes that deploying this new technology can have for student learning.

Here are some specific things our school will do to support the use of generative AI in a responsible way:

- **Educate students about AI.** Students should understand what AI is, how it works, and how it can be used for good and for bad. They should also be aware of appropriate and inappropriate uses of the technology in an academic context.
- **Develop policies for the use of AI in the classroom.** Students, faculty, and parents should be aware of moments when AI is being used, and how all are expected to interact with it productively.
- **Use AI to enhance learning.** AI can be used to create personalized learning experiences, provide feedback to students, and help students learn at their own pace.

Overall, Peoria Academy believes that AI has the potential to be a powerful tool for learning, and we embrace the opportunity to use AI in a responsible way that promotes academic integrity and ethical behavior.

*This position piece was written with the help of Bard (bard.google.com) based on the IB's [Statement about AI](#), then edited by the PA Board for clarity and relevance.