

PRA Classical Academy for Homeschoolers

Family Handbook for K-8

2023-2024

PRA Classical Academy for Homeschoolers exists to encourage and equip parents, educate students with excellence, and integrate home and school learning experiences in order to prepare students for success in high school and college.

Elizabeth Williams, Director

ewilliams@prak8.org

Danielle Noe, Office Manager

dnoe@prak8.org

Contact Information:

Phone: 303-221-1071 option #2

Office email: pracadh_office@prak8.org

Teachers:

Michelle Albury (Lead Teacher K-4)

Laura Dingman (Humanities, LA, Science 7-8)

Denise Floto (Math 5-8)

Rakel Gonzalez (Spanish K-4)

Christine Hogan (Language Arts 5-8)

Estelle Mathis (Engineering Lab 5-8, Algebra)

Anne-Marie Robbins (Teacher K-4)

Michelle Strong (K-2)

Kim Young (Science 5-8)

Jenafer Zwyer (Humanities 5-8)

PRA Classical Academy Location:

Cornerstone Church
9941 Lone Tree Parkway
Lone Tree CO 80124

Instructional Aides:

Celeste Eft (K-8)

Kara Milne (K-2)

Julie Swick (K-8)

Parent Website:

www.praclassicalacademy.com

PRA Main Campus (full-time school):

Platte River Academy

4085 Larkspur Drive

Highlands Ranch CO 80126

Phone number: 303-221-1070

Welcome to PRA Classical Academy

Creating a community of deep thinkers through academically rich, experiential learning.

PRA Classical Academy is a part-time charter school program designed to meet the needs of home-schooled students and their families in grades K-8 through experiential learning. A classical, university style approach is used with an emphasis on science, humanities, language arts, and math. After-school activities may include art, music, foreign language, physical education, drama and much more!

PRA Classical Academy's Mission is to:

- Create a community of deep thinkers through academically rich, experiential learning.
- Assist home school families with a classical, college-preparatory education.
- Facilitate the cooperation of parents, teachers, and students.
- Create a learning environment that fosters growth in character, high academic achievement, and the love of learning.
- Cultivate responsible, productive citizens.

More Information:

Any questions that are not addressed in this handbook may be covered on the PRACAH website: www.praclassicalacademy.com. Further information may also be available in the handbook, policies, and procedures of our umbrella school, Platte River Academy, which can also be found on their website: <https://www.prak8.org>.

Family Support & Expectations

PRA Classical Academy holds high expectations for our staff, students, and parents. It is critical to have the full support of parents, both during and after school. As part of the enrollment process, we ask that parents thoroughly review and agree to the expectations for communication, homework, discipline, volunteerism and other school policies as specified in this document.

Assignment Expectations

PRA Classical Academy's curriculum requires commitment and dedication in the classroom and at home to ensure academic success. Parents should ensure that at-home assignments are neat, organized, and completed on time and in an environment that is conducive to learning. It is our intent to provide assignments that will enhance the student's learning.

PRA Classical Academy students are considered homeschooled. On each off-campus school day, this is the approximate time parents should expect their students to spend working on at-home assignments:

- K-2: no at-home work assigned
- 3rd/4th grades: 30-45 minutes per core subject
- 5th/6th grades: 45-60 minutes per core subject
- 7th/8th grades: 60-75 minutes per core subject

At-Home Assignments & Parental Involvement

Students who are on-campus twice per week are receiving many at-home assignments for the other school days, so it is critical that parents provide direction and monitor their students' work.

Our assignments are different from a typical homework assignment. Homework in a traditional school involves a student practicing what they've already learned in class. However, PRA Classical Academy at-home assignments are typically designed to be instructive and an extension of learning, which often requires parent-educator oversight and regular involvement with the student. Teachers post assignments weekly in Google Classroom. Please use your student's log-in to access this information. Google Classroom also has an app that families can use to access the information on their devices.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Teachers are delighted to collaborate with parents to provide academic support. Parent-teacher communication is a key component to this process.

- For important information, please remember to check emails frequently throughout the day as well as your student's Google Classroom and TeacherEase (where teachers upload grades for 3rd-8th).
- For 3rd-8th, teachers ask that parents not use Google Classroom to communicate with them as those messages are not as easy to track and retrieve later. They ask parents to send messages through email and have students use Google Classroom to communicate. If parents choose to excuse students from or modify an assignment, for example, they will need to send the message through email, not Google Classroom.
- If you have questions or concerns about a specific class, please speak directly with the teacher. If you still have questions or concerns at that point, then feel free to contact the PRA Classical Academy Director.

Emergency Communications

If you need to contact your student during the school day, call or text the office at 303-221-1071 option #2. Please remember not to contact students directly via cell phone; students will be required to keep all electronic devices (including, but not limited to: cell phones, computers, kindles, iPads, etc.) in backpacks until the end of the school day. Please make sure that you have downloaded the ReachWell app to receive urgent/emergency notifications. If your emergency contact information is different for a specific day, please email the Director or Office Manager. Emergency information should be kept up-to-date throughout the school year.

Other School Communications

The staff at the PRA Classical Academy works very hard to stay in communication with families. Every Friday, parents will receive a weekly newsletter through email and the ReachWell app. The newsletter will provide information about upcoming events, school activities, and important updates.

School Closures and Weather Delays

In the event of inclement weather, the PRA Classical Academy follows Douglas County protocols. Please check the Douglas County School District site for school closures and weather related delays. Families will also receive closure and delay messages through the ReachWell app. In the event of a delayed start, classes at PRA Classical Academy will begin at 9:30 am with normal dismissal time.

Student Fees

Before the beginning of the school year, parents will need to pay student fees (approximately \$95-\$215, depending on grade level) to help offset costs for lab fees, consumable books and supplies, copying, special events, yearbooks, some of the field trips, and more.

Volunteering

PRA Classical Academy believes that volunteers are a key component to the success of the school as well as to the education of our students. K-2 (1-day-per-week) families are asked to volunteer for three lunch periods plus an additional 10 hours per year. 3rd-8th (2-day-per-week) families are asked to volunteer for five lunch periods plus an additional 15 hours per year. For families with both K-2 and 3-8 students, the hours are not combined; families need only complete the volunteer hours requested for their oldest student.

Attendance Policies

Please notify PRACAH staff if your child will be absent. There is a form on the website that can be used, or you can email or call the office. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time, please stay in communication with each teacher on how to make up missed assignments.

Health/Medications at School

Students should be free of fever and/or flu-like symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is at school and has a fever of 100 degrees or more, you will be called to take him/her home. Please pick your child up within 30 minutes of this call.

It is recommended that, if possible, students take medication before and after school rather than during the school day. Most medications are available in long acting form and parents are encouraged to administer such medication at home to avoid administration at school. If prescription medication must be administered at school, it must be done so in the office. All prescription medication must be furnished in the original pharmacy labeled package or container. No medications, including acetaminophen, cough syrup, or other over the counter drugs may be administered by staff without consent forms on file.

October Count (September 25 - October 9)

School funding requires that every student attend school during October Count. Please notify PRACAH by phone or email if your child is sick or an emergency occurs.

Single Publicly-Funded Enrollment

Students may not be enrolled in any other public school or public online program while attending PRA Classical Academy.

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

Students will be able to enrich their learning through optional, fee-based, elective courses offered in the afternoon from 2:00 – 3:30 pm. In order to offer these courses, the PRA Classical Academy will enlist the help of teachers, industry professionals, community members, and parents to help teach and inspire students. Class fees are dependent on the length of class and materials required. For safety reasons, every student who remains on campus after school must be involved in an ELO activity. Check options on the website: <https://www.prak8.org/schools/after-school-programs>

Carpool Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Please make sure that your student arrives on time and is prepared to learn. Doors will open at 7:50 am. Students should enter the basement entrance of the building between 7:50-7:55 am and be prepared for classes at 8:00 am.

Students will be dismissed and should be picked up promptly unless they are registered for and participating in after-school activities. Students enrolled in after-school activities or classes must be picked up immediately after those activities or classes are dismissed. For safety reasons, every student who remains on campus after school must be involved in an ELO activity. Please notify the office at prakah_office@prak8.org or 303-221-1071, option 2 if you have an emergency and are not able to pick up on time.

Families living in the immediate vicinity of our location at Cornerstone Church may choose to have their students walk or ride their bicycles to and from school. Please let the office know if your student will have the option to walk or ride a bike to school. Parents will assume all liability for their student's bicycles as well as for their child's physical safety.

Curriculum Check-out

For K-2, many families choose to follow their own curriculum on the days they are home, while others build on the subjects and units we are teaching in the classroom. If parents would like copies of the workbooks and textbooks being used in class, they can check them out if they are available and return the non-consumable materials at the end of the year. Parents will be responsible for paying for lost or damaged materials.

For 3rd-8th, textbooks and consumables will be provided for their PRA Classical Academy classes during the school year. All checked-out, non-consumable materials must be returned at the end of the year in good condition. Parents will be responsible for paying for lost or damaged materials.

PRA Classical Academy also provides a curriculum lending library where parents can check out additional supplemental materials, depending on availability, such as spelling, grammar, science, math, and a variety of other textbooks. The textbooks need to be returned before the end of the school year. Consumable workbooks may also be available which can be taken home and used; some of these do not need to be returned.

Grades

For K-2 students, teachers will provide feedback to parents but will not assign students an overall class grade.

For 3rd-8th students, some assignments will be graded by the teacher. At other times, teachers may ask the parent educator to grade certain assignments. Teachers will upload all grades in TeacherEase. A final grade will be provided for each class at the end of the semester. Parents should check Google Classroom and TeacherEase regularly throughout the school year both for missing assignments and student progress, and once the semester is over and grades are finalized, parents should print the final grades for their records before the next semester starts. PRA Classical Academy does not keep records of grades once a new semester begins and does not share this information with the district. Homeschool parents are responsible to keep track of all student's grades assigned by PRA Classical Academy and any supplemental classes completed at home.

Transcripts and Recommendations

The PRA Classical Academy is a homeschool program and provides grades for 3rd-8th for the classes we offer. This assumes that you, as a homeschool parent, will supplement these offerings with elective courses and extensions of the core classes. As your student moves into high school, some schools will ask for transcripts as well as copies of attendance/behavior records. While we are happy to provide the latter, we are unable to offer transcripts as a two-day-per-week program. As a homeschool parent, there are many templates available online to create a transcript, incorporating the courses at the PRA Classical Academy and adding supplemental courses that you have provided at home for your child. Attaching the grades provided by the PRA Classical Academy to the transcript should provide the necessary information for your child's future school. Some high schools will require recommendations from current teachers and school leadership. As a courtesy, please ask staff members if they would be willing and able to provide a recommendation before sending them any forms/surveys to complete.

IEP, ALP, ELLP, MTSS, 504 Service and Accommodations

Applicants interested in attending Platte River Academy's Classical Academy for Homeschoolers (PRACAH) should be aware that this program only meets one or two days per week. The programming and services defined within a student's IEP are based on specialized service providers and time allotments over a typical 5-day week; therefore, most students on IEPs or other formal plans must attend a full-time program in order for the designated services to be provided. Because

PRACAH is a part-time homeschooling program and parents are considered the primary educators, the services designated inside the formal plans cannot be met. PRACAH's teachers will work with families to provide accommodations for any student with specific learning needs and/or disabilities; however, the student's IEP ALP, ELLP or MTSS with specific time allocations for services with providers will be suspended while enrolled at PRACAH.

All students, including those with special needs and current IEPs, deserve the same opportunities to enroll in our school, and if the student's needs can be met within our current framework they will be enrolled in the PRACAH program. Upon enrollment a Director from PRA will contact the parents of a student with a formal plan to discuss and determine if the student's needs can be met at PRACAH. Once it is determined that PRACAH in partnership with the homeschool family can meet the student's needs, the family will need to waive services and the formal plan will be suspended. However, if it is determined that the required services are essential to the child's success at school and are not available at PRACAH then the team will support a transition to an appropriate program or location.

State of Colorado Homeschool Requirements

- A nonpublic home-based educational program shall include no less than one hundred seventy-two days of instruction, averaging four instructional contact hours per day. (The PRA Classical Academy program for 3-8 will more than fulfill the required hours).
- Your home school program shall include, but is not limited to communication skills of reading, writing and speaking, mathematics, history, civics, literature, science, and regular courses of instruction in the constitution of the United States. (The PRA Classical Academy provides curriculum and instruction in the following subjects: math, science, humanities/social studies, and writing. All other subjects must be covered at home).
- The parent or guardian must provide written notification explaining the intent to homeschool his or her child. (Regardless of which district families reside in, they can fill out a notification to homeschool form for any school district in Colorado. If you choose to complete the Douglas County School District Notification to Homeschool form, you can do so here: <https://edocs.dcsdk12.org/dcsdk12/renderSmartForm.action?formId=df40185-8917-4934-9b88-a66f642f3609> On this form, you will need to select that your student will be attending a public school and select PRA as the specific school.
- The student being home schooled must either take a nationally standardized achievement test when he/she reaches grades three, five, seven, nine, and eleven to evaluate academic progress, or a qualified person must evaluate the student's academic progress at the parent's expense. (Every Spring, the PRA Classical Academy provides a list of tests that can be proctored online at home, but

this is ultimately the parent's responsibility). You must submit the test results to the same public school district that you sent your notification to homeschool form. For more details and FAQs you can visit the Colorado Department of Education website.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to treat classmates, parents, teachers, and property with utmost respect and to practice all four of PRACAH core values at school: respect, responsibility, compassion, and integrity. PRA Classical Academy will not tolerate any form of violence or abuse including, but not limited to, actions, words or insults toward other students, parents or staff.

Dress Code

Students should be respectful in their clothing so as not to detract from the learning environment. Clothing should be modest and without visible undergarments, rips or tears, inappropriate language, or inappropriate symbols. Dresses, skirts, or shorts should be no shorter than fingertip length. Tights, leggings, or other types of hosiery should be accompanied by a fingertip length or longer top or dress. This dress code may be modified as needed during the school year. No weapons of any kind are allowed at school or on school grounds under any circumstances.

Electronic Devices

PRA Classical Academy students will be required to keep all personal electronic devices (including, but not limited to: cell phones, airpods, headphones, computers, kindles, iPads, etc.) in backpacks until the end of the school day. Parents may call the school at 303-221-1071 option #2, if they need to contact their child during the school day.

Pizza Available on Thursdays

On Thursdays for 3rd-8th grades, the PRA Classical Academy provides the opportunity for students to order pizza by the slice. Choices include pepperoni or cheese. Gluten free pizzas are available. Students are asked to place their orders and make payment before classes start at 8:00 am. Students must bring a sack lunch on Tuesdays. Middle-school students also have access to microwaves during lunchtime.

Plagiarism

PRA Classical Academy does not tolerate plagiarism. If a student turns in a plagiarized paper, he/she will automatically receive a zero on that assignment. There will be a meeting called between the

student, the parent, the teacher, and the administration to ensure that the student understands the seriousness of the offense. For more information on plagiarism visit: Plagiarism.org