

Prices Fork Elementary

Connections

Summer Program 2023
Parent Handbook

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Montgomery County Public Schools does not discriminate in its programs and activities for reasons of race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, age, or on any other basis prohibited by law. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

*Director of Human Resources and Assistant Superintendent for Operations
750 Imperial Street SE Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-5100*

Connections Philosophy

The Connections Program seeks to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for elementary school aged children to learn, explore, and grow in individual, small group, and classwide settings. Children will have opportunities to socialize with their peers, explore hobbies, and discover new passions in a positive and safe learning environment.

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*Please fill out pages 12-16 completely, then detach and return. Pages 1-11 should be kept for your records.

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Parents/Guardians are required to read the parent handbook in its entirety before filling out and returning all registration forms. Online copies of the parent handbook and registration forms may be obtained under the Connections tab on the Prices Fork Elementary Schools website. Physical copies may be obtained in the front office or in the Connections room. Completed forms may be returned to the front office, the child's classroom teacher, or by email. Once all forms have been returned and reviewed by our staff, and the registration fee has been paid, you will be notified by email to confirm your child's enrollment in our summer program. Enrollment is taken through May 1st in accordance with space availability. Admission to the Connections summer program is made on a first come first serve basis and is limited by available staffing. Safety and appropriate supervision ratios will be used to determine whether space is available. Once we reach capacity, students may be placed on a waitlist and be offered admission at a later date if a spot becomes available. Admission can be denied or retracted if any student's admission and/or attendance will create a safety concern or an overload for the current staffing. Priority will be given to PFES students and those who have attended our summer program in previous years. Children's records will be treated confidentially.

Legal Paperwork

For legal purposes, the Connections Program must have legal paperwork on file regarding custody matters.

Program Costs

The Connections Program offers 4 attendance options and rates during our summer program. Field trip costs are **not included** in these prices and will vary based on location but will not exceed \$15 per trip. There is a 10% sibling discount that applies to the second child (or \$5 off the day rate).

Day Rate	1 day per week ONLY	\$35
Part Time Rate	2 days per week	\$65
Half Day Rate	3-5 days per week (less than 5 hours per day)	\$65
Full Time Rate	3-5 days per week (5+ hours per day)	\$130

Payments:

Payment for that day (or week) is due when your child is dropped off. You may pay in cash, by check (made out to PFES), or by credit card on myschoolbucks.com. Delinquent accounts may result in dismissal from the program.

Summer Schedule and Hours of Operation:

Connections Hours:

The Connections summer program is open from **7:30am-5:30pm**.

AM Drop Off

Sign in is **required** upon arrival. There will be a sign in sheet located at the classroom entrance. **DO NOT** leave your child until they are signed in and a staff member is aware that they have arrived. Your child may be dropped off at any point during the day after 7:30. If we are not in the classroom, there will be a sign on the door with our location.

PM Pick up

Sign out is **required** before your child leaves for the day. Anyone other than parents **must** provide identification and be an authorized contact in order to pick-up children. Your child may be picked up at any point during the day before 5:30. If we are not in the classroom, there will be a sign on the door with our location.

Field Trips and Experiences

The Connections program will be taking a field trip or having a special experience every single week this summer! These experiences are currently being planned and finalized. Past experiences include bowling, hand-in-hand park, a water field day, and tie dye! We have already confirmed that this summer we will be taking a trip to the Virginia Tech Museum of Geosciences, and having some animal visitors from the Mill Mountain Zoo! We will have a finalized list of field trips and costs by May 1st.

- Montgomery County Public Schools will provide transportation for field trips. If parents know that their child will be arriving later than the trip departure time, they are welcome to bring the child to the field trip location, however they will be required to notify the staff by phone call or email prior to dropping their child off.
- There is **no childcare** available at the school while Connections is on a field trip. This allows us to have the lowest staff member to child ratio as possible while outside of school grounds.
- If your child has repeated behavioral problems prior to a field trip or experience that may present a safety risk to themselves or others while outside of the school, they may not be permitted to attend the trip. If this is the case, the parent/guardian will be notified at least 24 hours prior to the field trip and will be responsible for finding alternative care for their child on this day.

Connections 2023 Summer Schedule and Weekly Themes

Wednesday May 24th	Last Day of School! Connections before and after school program will be open normal hours.
Thursday-Friday May 25th-26th	Connections will be closed as we prepare for our summer program!
Monday May 29th	Connections will be closed in observance of Memorial Day.
Tuesday-Friday May 30th-June 2nd	<p>Week 1: Pirates, Princesses, and Cowboys Week</p> <p><i>Calling all rulers of the land and sea! To kick our program off, we'll live like royalty, conquer the 7 seas and explore the wild, wild west! Saddle up and adjust your crown as we set sail on our summer adventure!</i></p> <p>Field Trip: Hand in Hand Park (free)</p>
Monday-Friday June 5th-9th	<p>Week 4: Challenge Week</p> <p><i>A week full of team building, competitions, and fun! From our easy everyday routines to the fiercest of games, this week we will learn how to encourage each other and challenge ourselves to be our best! Are you up for the test?</i></p> <p>Special Event/Field Trip: TBD</p>
Monday-Friday June 12th-16th	<p>Week 3: STEM Week</p> <p><i>Science, Technology, Engineering, AND Math? What does it all mean, will we ever find the path? We must build, research, run experiments, and grow if we ever want to uncover all the wonderful things that STEM can show!</i></p> <p>Special Event/Field Trip: TBD</p>
Monday June 19th	Connections will be closed in observance of Juneteenth.
Tuesday-Friday June 20th-23rd	<p>Week 2: Out of this World Week</p> <p><i>3-2-1 Blast off! Join our space explorers as we leave our home planet behind and travel the universe! We'll visit far away galaxies, leap through the stars, and even catch up with the cow as he makes his big jump over the moon- with so much space to cover, we better get going soon!</i></p> <p>Special Event/Field Trip: TBD</p>
Monday-Friday June 26th-30th	<p>Week 5: Sports Week</p> <p><i>We're hitting the courts and unlocking the power of sports! From basketball, to soccer, and even cheerleading too- if you love to play the game, this week is for you!</i></p> <p>Special Event/Field Trip: TBD</p>
Monday-Friday July 3rd-7th	Connections will be closed this week.

<p>Monday-Friday July 10th-14th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 6: Time Travel Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Start up your DeLorean, hop in your TARDIS or jump into that portal because during week 3, we leave 2023 behind! We'll venture back in time to dine with dinosaurs and flash into the future to explore the unknown. You'd better buckle up because you never know where, or when, we'll land!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Field Trip: Virginia Tech Museum of Geosciences (free)</p>
<p>Monday-Friday July 17th-21st</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 7: Four Seasons Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall- walk through the seasons with us, we'll see them all! We'll finish the week with Christmas in July. All the seasons in one week? It'll be tough, but we'll try!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Event: Mill Mountain Zoo Animal Encounters (cost TBD)</p>
<p>Monday-Friday July 24th-28th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 8: Splish Splash Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hold your breath, make a wish, and keep your eyes peeled for fish as we "swim" through lakes, oceans, rivers, and pools and take a closer look at anything and everything related to water!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Event: Water Field Day (free)</p>
<p>Monday-Friday July 31st-August 4th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 9: Creative Connections Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Painters, dancers, singers, writers, and problem solvers unite and bring your imaginations! As Shel Silverstein said, "If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar, a hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer...if you are a pretender come sit by my fire for we have some flax-golden tales to spin. Come in! Come in!"</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Event/ Field Trip TBD</p>
<p>Monday-Friday August 7th-11th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Week 10: Connections Has Talent Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>After exploring our hobbies and discovering new passions all summer, we're finally ready to take the stage! We will spend this week discovering just how far our talents can take us in life, and close our summer program with a talent show that celebrates all our new friends and shows off our individual skills!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Event/Field Trip: TBD</p>
<p>Monday-Tuesday August 14th-15th</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Connections will be closed as we prepare for the 2023-24 school year!</p>

General Information and Policies:

- The Connections program serves boys and girls ages 5 to 12, grades K through 5. **Children who are currently 4 years old, but will turn 5 before ___ may be enrolled in the summer program.**
- It is the responsibility of the parents to keep proper registration information and current phone numbers in their child's Connections Program permanent records. Services may be withheld if this information is not provided. Connections will have access and will use the information in the school cumulative records as needed.
- If you wish to contact the Connections Program, you can call the Program Coordinator at 540-558-3739. During program hours, please try more than once when staff do not answer. (Sometimes we cannot hear the phone). After hours, please leave a message, and the Program Coordinator will return your call as soon as possible. You may also email the program director at emilystrom@mcps.org. Emails are checked multiple times throughout the day. Because we want to remain focused on the children, emails may not be responded to until the end of the workday.
- Whenever possible, the parent(s) should call the program at 540-558-3739 when he/she will be late for pick-up. Alternate arrangements should be considered. Continued late pick-up may result in suspension or termination of services. It is the Connections Program policy that when a child is not picked up by 5:40 p.m., a call shall be made to the parents and those authorized to pick up the child. If no one can be reached, the Program Director will stay at the school until a parent or authorized person arrives. After 6:30 p.m. the proper authorities will be notified to ensure the child's safety. This will result in immediate termination from the Connections Program unless it was an unavoidable emergency.
- Children are to be signed out by a parent(s), guardian(s), or authorized person(s). They are not allowed to leave alone or without accompaniment of an authorized adult. The Connections Program staff will only release your child(ren) to individuals listed on the application form. If someone not listed in the child's permanent file is to pick up your child, you must contact the Connections Program Coordinator and provide a written note, authorizing this person by name. We will ask for proper identification and then release your child.
- Parents are required to notify the Program Coordinator of any changes in the child's health history and immunizations that are received after enrollment.

Health and Safety:

- An “Accident/Incident Report” form is used for any serious injury, accident, or occurrence. The information is recorded, signed by staff and parent/guardian, and filed. Two copies will be made; one for the parent/guardian and one to be placed in the child’s file by the attending staff member.
- All staff will actively supervise children outside. All staff has been trained to cover the areas of outside play. A designated person will accompany all children when entering or exiting the school.
- Parents who have children who require medication for serious medical conditions must complete an “Authorization to Give Medication” form if the child requires medication while at the program. All medications will be kept by the school nurse, but Connections will have access to these medications. Medicines must be in original containers. Please give specific instructions. If medication is to continue for more than 10 days, a letter from the physician is required along with the form. When needed, medication shall be refrigerated. Staff will keep records about the administration of medication and will inform parents of any adverse reaction to medication administered and any medication error. Medication shall be returned to the parents as soon as it is no longer needed.
- Students are **not permitted** to attend the Connections Program if they have:
 - fever
 - contagious illness
 - vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Students should be free of fever/vomiting/diarrhea (without medication) for 24 hours before they can return to Connections.
- Parents are required to pick-up their child as soon as possible if he/she becomes ill while in the Connections Program.

Summer Supplies:

First Day Supplies: Please send these items with your child on their first day of summer to **leave** at the Connection Program. These supplies will be kept in a designated area and returned at the end of our summer program. Please make sure these items are **labeled clearly** with your child’s first and last name.

- **Bottle of sunscreen:** Please label your child’s sunscreen on the side and bottom of the bottle to prevent smudges.
- **Change of clothes:** Please provide your child with an extra shirt, shorts, underwear, socks, and shoes (if possible). The change of clothes will be used for “accidents” of all kinds such as spills, tears and rips, sweat, comfort level, etc.. Every child must have a change of clothes regardless of age or grade level. If your child uses their change of clothing, please send in a new set ASAP. Any soiled clothing will be sealed in a bag and returned to the parent/guardian at the pickup.
- **(Optional) Bug Spray**

Every Day Supplies: A “before I leave the house” checklist for your child each morning to ensure they have all the necessary supplies to have a great day!

- Backpack or bag to hold all personal belongings (labeled with child’s name)
- Morning Snack
- Lunchbox or bag (labeled with child’s name)
- Water bottle with lid (labeled with child’s name)
- Positive Attitude 😊
- (optional) Chromebook/Charger/Headphones

Food and Drink Policy:

- Children will only be permitted to eat during designated times throughout the day. Children must remain seated at a table while eating. If your child has special circumstances that may require them to eat more frequently throughout the day, or has any dietary restrictions or food allergies, a parent/guardian must provide written documentation for any needed accommodations.
- Connections **does not** have the ability to refrigerate or microwave **any** food for your child. All snacks and lunches must be eaten “as is” straight from your child’s lunch box.
- All lunch boxes, water bottles, and food containers **must** be labeled clearly with your child’s first and last name.
- **Breakfast:** Your child may eat breakfast before they arrive, or they may bring a packed breakfast from home and eat it upon arrival in the morning. Breakfast may not be eaten outside or in the gym. If your child arrives when we are outside of the classroom, we will ask that they wait until we return to the room to eat.
- **Morning Snack:** Your child needs to bring a snack from home to eat for morning snack. This can be packed in their lunchbox, or in a separate container. If you pack a snack in your child’s lunch, please label it clearly so your child knows what they should be eating. Snacks should be quick and easy to eat as snack time is only 15 minutes long. Examples of morning snacks include yogurt, fruit, granola bars, applesauce, crackers, etc.
- **Lunch:** Lunchtime is from 12:00 to 12:30 each day. If your child is going to be present during that time, you must provide a packed lunch for your child. Please make sure your child is able to finish their provided food during this 30 minute time period. If your child arrives after this time, but has not eaten lunch, please make sure you still provide lunch with your child and let a staff member know during drop off that your child has not eaten so we can arrange a time and place for them to do so.
- **Afternoon snack:** You do not need to provide your child with an afternoon snack. The Connections program provides each child with 1 juice box or water bottle and 1 prepackaged snack that meets USDA standards. If your child has leftover food from their lunch, or if you would like to

send your child with an extra snack, they will be permitted to eat them during this time as well. Afternoon snack is 15 minutes long.

- **Water Bottles and Drinks:** All children must bring a refillable water bottle each day labeled with their first and last name. We will use these throughout the day in the classroom as well as when we are outside or on field trips. Children may pack juice or other drinks for snack or lunch, however all drinks must have a lid. Sodas and energy drinks are not allowed.
- When necessary, a special “PEANUT FREE” table will be provided for children with peanut and other food allergies.

Student Conduct and Behavioral Policies:

Please review this section with your child prior to the summer program. Repeated violations of Connections rules may result in your child’s dismissal from the Connections program. All Connections rules and procedures have been put in place to ensure that Connections is a safe, fun, and welcoming environment for all kids to learn, explore, and grow. Children are always welcome to open a dialogue with staff about the rules if they feel they are unfair or could be improved. We try our best to follow up with children when rules are broken to discuss how we can do things differently in the future. We recognize that every child is unique and are more than willing to work with any individual who needs an accommodation for specific rules. If you feel your child may require any special behavioral accommodations, please contact the Program Coordinator to set up a meeting.

Connections Classroom Behavior Policy: Any child who is breaking a rule will receive 2 verbal warnings to correct the behavior. It will always be made clear when warnings are given. If the behavior continues after the second warning, the child will receive a consequence.

- Consequences include: sitting out, apologizing, writing a letter home to parents or administration, losing privileges (for example: chromebook time, ability to play with certain items, etc.), or having a 1 on 1 sit down meeting with the Program Coordinator. Consequences will vary based on the severity of the infraction.
- The 2 warning policy applies to every situation, except for when there is a risk of harm (the 3 nonnegotiable rules).

3 Nonnegotiable Rules in Connections: These are rules that are in place to protect the safety of the children and staff. There are no warnings or second chances for any child who breaks these rules. If one of these rules is broken, it automatically results in a classroom consequence as well as informing the parents, principals, or both, of the situation. Depending on the severity of the situation, violation of any of these rules may result in the termination of the child's enrollment in the Connections program.

1. **No child may leave the classroom, gym, or designated area without notifying an adult.**

- a. If there is a situation where a child needs to leave (to go back to their classroom, visit the nurse, use the restroom, go to the calm room, etc.), the child must first ask permission from an adult who will escort them in the hallways.
- 2. No child may hit, punch, scratch, kick, or lay their hands on another student or adult with the intent to cause harm to that individual.**
 - a. This includes any acts of aggression towards classroom items that could potentially cause harm to people in the surrounding area. (For example, kicking shelves that could fall onto others, throwing objects, etc.)
 - b. If a child is feeling angry, sad, or overwhelmed and needs a way to express those feelings, they need to seek out an adult before the situation escalates to find a solution.
- 3. No child may use threatening, violent, or demeaning language when speaking about others or themselves.**

Other Connections Classroom Rules: This is not an all inclusive list as there are rules for every station, activity, and situation in Connections. We have regular meetings with the kids to go over old rules, and create new ones. All the children know the rules and are very good about reminding each other of the rules, and helping new children learn them. These are a few general guidelines that we follow for every student.

1. No chromebooks are to be used except during designated “chromebook time”. No other technology is permitted in the Connections program.
 - a. If a child wants to use their chromebook outside of this time, they must have permission from an adult to do a specific activity.
 - b. Tablets, gaming consoles, and all other forms of technology are not allowed without permission from the Program Coordinator.. If a child brings any of these devices, they will be confiscated and kept safe until they can be returned to the child’s parent/guardian.
 - c. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during the Connections program. If you feel your child needs to have their phone, it must remain on silent mode and inside their bookbag.
2. All toys, stations, and classroom supplies must be shared with others.
3. All kids must work together during clean up time. No child is “done” until the entire classroom is cleaned.
 - a. During clean up time, children must first clean up whatever they were playing with. Once they have done that, if the room is not yet clean, they must find something else to help with. This includes helping a friend clean up their mess, stacking chairs, picking up trash, etc.
4. When an adult, child, or guest, is speaking or presenting, all children must be respectful.
 - a. This means no talking, playing with toys, or causing disruptions to others.
5. No child may call home during Connections.
 - a. The only time Connections calls home is when the child is sick.

- b. The Connections program does not call home for homesickness or if the child is not having fun. We recognize that a lot of the time, children are in Connections because their parents have to work. We understand the importance of not interrupting the parents during this time and we are committed to working with the child to find alternative solutions for these issues.
 - c. When rules are broken and parents need to be contacted, we will do so during pick up time, or by email or phone call outside of Connections hours.
6. No child may give **anything** to another child during the Connections Program.
 - a. This includes sharing food, toys, clothing, or anything else that comes from home. If there is a concern about a child's wellbeing (not having enough food, clothing, etc.) please contact the Program Coordinator and we will work with you to address the issue.
7. Children may bring toys and supplies from home **at their own risk**.
 - a. The Connections program is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged items. We encourage children to leave their personal items at home, however they may bring them if they choose, as long as they do not cause disruptions.
 - b. If any item brought from home is causing interruptions during the program it will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the day.
 - c. Children may bring Pokemon cards to look at, but trading is **prohibited**. Any child caught trading cards will not be permitted to bring them for the remainder of the summer program.

Playground Policies: Children are allowed to play in designated areas of the playground within supervision of staff.

- Toys, balls, etc. are used on the grass or hard surface, not on equipment for safety.
- Children may not climb on the tops or outside of playground equipment. Children are not permitted to climb any trees, fences, or buildings.
- Children may not climb up the slides. They must slide down feet first, one at a time.
- Children must remain seated and holding on when on the swings, seesaw, and spinner. They must remain seated until they come to a complete stop. Children will be instructed to not walk close to any of these pieces of playground equipment to avoid the danger of being hit or knocked down.
- Children may not do any forward or backward flips on the playground. This includes on the ground, swings, monkey bars, and any other playground equipment.