

Frequently Asked Questions

*****Special Note***** Due to the current pandemic, some or all of the usual routines associated with kindergarten orientation, the school calendar, and school day may be altered or interrupted for the 2020-2021 school year. We will try to update the answers on this page as more information becomes available. Thank you for your patience.

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Drop-off and pick-up

What time do kids need to be at school?

- School aides are present on the playgrounds from 8am. At 8:10 students line up by class and are led into the building. Students are not allowed up to their classrooms early.
- Students arriving after 8:15 are tardy and must sign in at the front office.

Where do kids line up before entering the building?

- Kindergarten assembles on the small playground to the right of the main front entrance
- All other grades line up on the playground blacktop at the back of the school.
- Please do not bring dogs on to school property while children are here.

What if the weather is bad – can students get into the building early?

- On rainy, snowy or extremely cold days children assemble inside from 8:00.
- Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades line up in the gym.
- 3rd, 4th and 5th grades line up in the cafeteria (please no parents in the cafeteria due to space limitations).

Where can I park? Where and how can I drop off my child?

- Parking near Peirce is very limited. Walking is encouraged if possible. If you do need to park, please find a legal parking space on a side street.
 - Drop off occurs in the circle near the front door (Blossom Street) and the parking lot accessible from Newland Rd.
 - Drivers must remain in their vehicles (drop and roll).
- If you need to walk your child to the playground, please park in a legal parking spot on one of the surrounding streets.

What time is pick-up? Where do I pick up my child?

- Pick-up is at 2:30pm M, W, Th, F; 1:00pm on Tue.
- Kindergarten is dismissed from the small playground to the right of the main front entrance.
- First grade is dismissed from the main front entrance.
- All other grades are dismissed from the back door of the building.

- Students in K-2nd grade must be met by a family member or designated adult.

Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks

Is breakfast available?

- Yes, breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 7:45am. The cost is \$1.25.

What is the policy about nuts in individual snacks and lunches?

- There is a nut-free table in the cafeteria for children with allergies. Only children with nut allergies and their friends who are purchasing lunch from the school may sit at this table.
- For the safety of all the children in the building it is recommended that snacks be nut free. Check with individual teachers for class-specific policies.

If my child is going to purchase lunch, how much is it and how do I pay for it?

- Lunch is \$3 per day. Milk comes with the lunch or can be purchased separately for 60¢.
- Students can bring money daily (in a ziplock baggie), however it is recommended that students pre-pay for lunches. Make a check out to "Town of Arlington," write your child's name and teacher's name on the subject line and send it in with your child in his or her folder. You may also visit <https://www.myschoolbucks.com> to create an account and load money for student lunches. You will need your child's student id number, which you should receive in the first few weeks of school, in order to create the account.
- The Arlington Public Schools lunch menu is updated monthly. <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/foodservices/>

Staying In Touch

What is PowerSchool, and how do I use it?

- PowerSchool is the school district's online student information system. When you registered your child for school, it was through the PowerSchool system.
- To set up a parent account for PowerSchool, you will need your child's student number. This number and details on how to register for an account will be sent to you during the first few weeks of school. The parent portal can be accessed from the APS website here: <https://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/departments/technology/powerschool/>
- It is important to keep your contact/emergency information up to date here, because this is the information that the school and school district will use to contact you for official communications.
- Information on attendance and grades are also available through PowerSchool.

How can I keep up to date on school news?

- The PTO compiles a weekly newsletter that is distributed via email throughout the school year. You can also check our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PeircePTOArlington/>

Who is the school secretary and how can they help me?

- Our school secretary, Pat Costa, can be reached at 781-316-3736, or by email at pcosta@arlington.k12.ma.us
- Pat can help if you have questions about PowerSchools, lunch pin numbers, CORI checks for volunteering, and much, much more.

How do I find out about school closings/delays?

- School closings and delays are reported on the Arlington Public Schools website, and on all local TV and radio stations. The district will also issue a phone call to numbers provided by families in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Whom do I call if my child is home sick?

- If your child is home sick, or absent for any other reason, please call the Safe Arrivals phone line at 781-316-3298.
- If you do not call by 8:15am, you will receive a safety call alerting you that your child is not in school.

- Please alert your child's teacher regarding any planned absences as well as calling them in to the Safe Arrivals line.

Getting Involved

What is the Peirce PTO?

- The Peirce Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer/parent- run organization with the primary goals of engaging in fundraising and community-building activities for the benefit of the families and students at The Peirce School. The PTO meets monthly and runs various events throughout the year. More information may be found here: <https://peircschool.info/pto/> .

How can I get involved at Peirce?

- The Peirce PTO helps organize a wonderful variety of activities that parents can take part in, some of which are ongoing throughout the year, and some of which are month or season specific. A list of opportunities and contact information can be found on the "Volunteering" section of the Peirce PTO website: <https://peircschool.info/volunteering/>
- Attend one of our monthly Parent Coffees in the cafeteria right after drop-off on the first Friday of the month. This is a great way to meet other parents and become familiar with the Peirce community.

What do I need to do if I want to volunteer in the school during the school day or chaperone field trips?

- Parents who volunteer in the school are required to complete the paperwork for CORI background checks. You will also need to bring a photo ID. For more information, please see Mrs. Costa, school secretary in the front office.

I want to budget my financial support for Peirce. What is the schedule for fundraising?

- Rather than ask families to sell items to relatives, colleagues, or neighbors, the Peirce PTO asks each Peirce family for a one-time contribution to the Peirce PTO Annual Fund. The suggested amount is \$100 per child (but any amount you can give is welcome!)
- You can find more information and donate to the Annual Fund here: <https://peircschool.info/pto-annual-fund/> . The PTO additionally sponsors other events throughout the year, which provide opportunities for community building as well as fundraising.

Are there other ways that I can support the school?

- Yes! The PTO encourages families to support Peirce by volunteering for and attending the many school events held for our families and students.
- Additionally, Peirce families may support the school by leveraging their shopping habits. We scan/collect Box Tops, and participate in the AmazonSmile program. Shop at <http://smile.amazon.com> and select Peirce PTO as your charity.

General Questions

What are my options for before and after school care?

- Beginning in the fall of 2019, before- and after-school care at Peirce will be provided by the Arlington After-School Program. For more information, contact Kim Nigro (knigro@arlington.k12.ma.us) or Todd Morse (tmorse@arlington.k12.ma.us).
- The 100 slots in the program are allotted to returning families and then by lottery. To be included in enrollment and the lottery you must have your enrollment form and fee by March 29th.
- Several other after-school programs bus from Peirce, including: Fidelity House (https://www.fidelityhouse.org/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29856) and the Boys and Girls Club (<https://www.abgclub.org/abgc-after-school-program>).

Where is the lost and found?

- Lost clothing, winter gear, water bottles and more can be picked up from the lost and found located in the stairwell outside the music room (around the corner from the gym).

Kindergarten Questions

When and how do I register for kindergarten? Is there an orientation?

- Kindergarten registration usually opens toward the end of January for students who will be 5 years old by September 1st. Registration for the Arlington Public Schools is completed online at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/schoolregistration/>. Early registration helps the school to plan for class size and staffing, so please do complete the registration as soon as you are able. Once you have registered, you will be invited to orientation events for both parents and children, as well as a screening appointment for your child. These events happen in the spring.

Are there any opportunities to meet other kindergarten families before school starts?

- Yes! Parent volunteers organized by Arlington Family Connection organize meetups throughout the summer. They also maintain a closed facebook group for incoming kindergarten families. This year's group can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2653071624769726/> (or search for Peirce School incoming kindergartners 2020-2021).

I have LOTS of questions! Can I speak with a current Peirce family to find out what it is like and get some answers?

- Yes! The PTO Welcome Team is here to help you! Sending your child to a new school is exciting but also nerve-racking. Let us help you become familiar with the Peirce school community, or point you towards an administrator who can help! Contact the welcome team at PeirceWelcomeTeam(at)gmail.com

When do I find out who my child's teacher will be?

- Class placements are usually announced in early August. You will receive a letter from your child's teacher introducing themselves and welcoming your child. The letter may also contain a list of equipment your child will need to keep at school (a change of clothes, a pair of headphones, etc).

When is the first day of school for kindergartners?

- The APS calendar can be found here: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/calendar/>. In a typical year, kindergarten employs a phased start to help students acclimate to the classroom. The first day of school is a short open-house visit with a parent. The following day half of each kindergarten class attends school for the full day while the other half stays home. The next day the second half of the class attends school and the first half stays home. On the next day, and thereafter, all students attend class for the full day.

How do I drop off and pick up my kindergartener? Can I come in and get them settled in class?

- Kindergartners may be dropped off from 8:00 AM at the small playground to the right of the front door. The kindergarten aides are on site to supervise children. At 8:10 the children will line up by class and be led into the building by their teacher or classroom aide. You are asked NOT to enter the building with your child, as this can be disruptive to the class and make separating more difficult for your child. Many parents do choose to wait with their child(ren) on the kindergarten playground until they line up to go inside. This is a great time to say goodbye, as well as to socialize with other parents.

How much recess will my kindergartener get?

- Kindergarten classes go out for recess at least twice a day - once in the morning for snack, and once as part of their lunch/recess period. There may be more outside time at the discretion of the teacher.

What curriculum does Arlington use for kindergarten?

- Arlington uses the Tools of the Mind curriculum for kindergarten. More information can be found here: <https://toolsofthemind.org/learn/tools-for-parents/>. The beginning of the year focuses on fairy tales, and later units are based around books from The Magic Treehouse series.