

# Picolata Crossing Elementary School

2675 Pacetti Road, St. Augustine, FL 32092

(904) 547-4160

<http://www-pce.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>



## 2022-2023 STUDENT HANDBOOK

Mr. Brian Morgan - Principal

Ms. Ewa Kolk – Asst. Principal

Mrs. Shannon Higgins – Asst. Principal

### **Mission:**

Picolata Crossing Elementary School will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.

### **Vision:**

All students will be provided an exceptional education that leads to a well-rounded individual who demonstrates good character, leadership, and critical thinking.

Picolata Crossing places a high value on the character and conduct of the faculty, staff, and students. A person of character lives by and models the qualities of respect, trustworthiness, personal responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Please take the time to read our student handbook carefully and become familiar with all topics included in this document. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call us at 904-547-4160.

**\*\*Note:** for the 2022-2023 school year, please refer to the St. Johns County School District Illness Guidelines found here: <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/health/illness/> for general health concerns related to your child.

There is no longer a dedicated district COVID hotline. For all future COVID-related testing, questions, or concerns, please consult your child's pediatrician for guidance and recommendations. Should the pediatrician recommend your child stay home from school, please notify your child's teacher(s) of their upcoming absence. Upon return to school, a parent or doctor's note must be provided to excuse the absence. St. Johns County School District will no longer provide exposure notifications for the upcoming school year

#### Access to our School

All adults must be registered volunteers to enter the school building during school hours. You must complete the district's Volunteer Application if you wish to volunteer, participate in any class activities, chaperone/attend a field study, eat in the courtyard, participate in a conference, or attend any performance or event during school hours. Please follow the link on the Picolata Crossing website or St. Johns County School District websites to apply.

#### [Volunteer Services – St. Johns County School District \(stjohns.k12.fl.us\)](https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)

Once registered as a volunteer, all visitors will sign-in at the front desk and present a valid state identification in order to receive a volunteer badge to be worn in the building. To minimize classroom disruptions, all visitors and volunteers must have a scheduled appointment with the classroom teacher before going to the classroom.

#### Address and Telephone Number Changes

Please notify our office immediately if there is

a change in your address, telephone number, or emergency contact information. This information is very important in case your child becomes ill or injured. If your address has changed, please bring in three proofs of residency reflecting the updated information.

#### Arrival Procedures (See Figure 1.a)

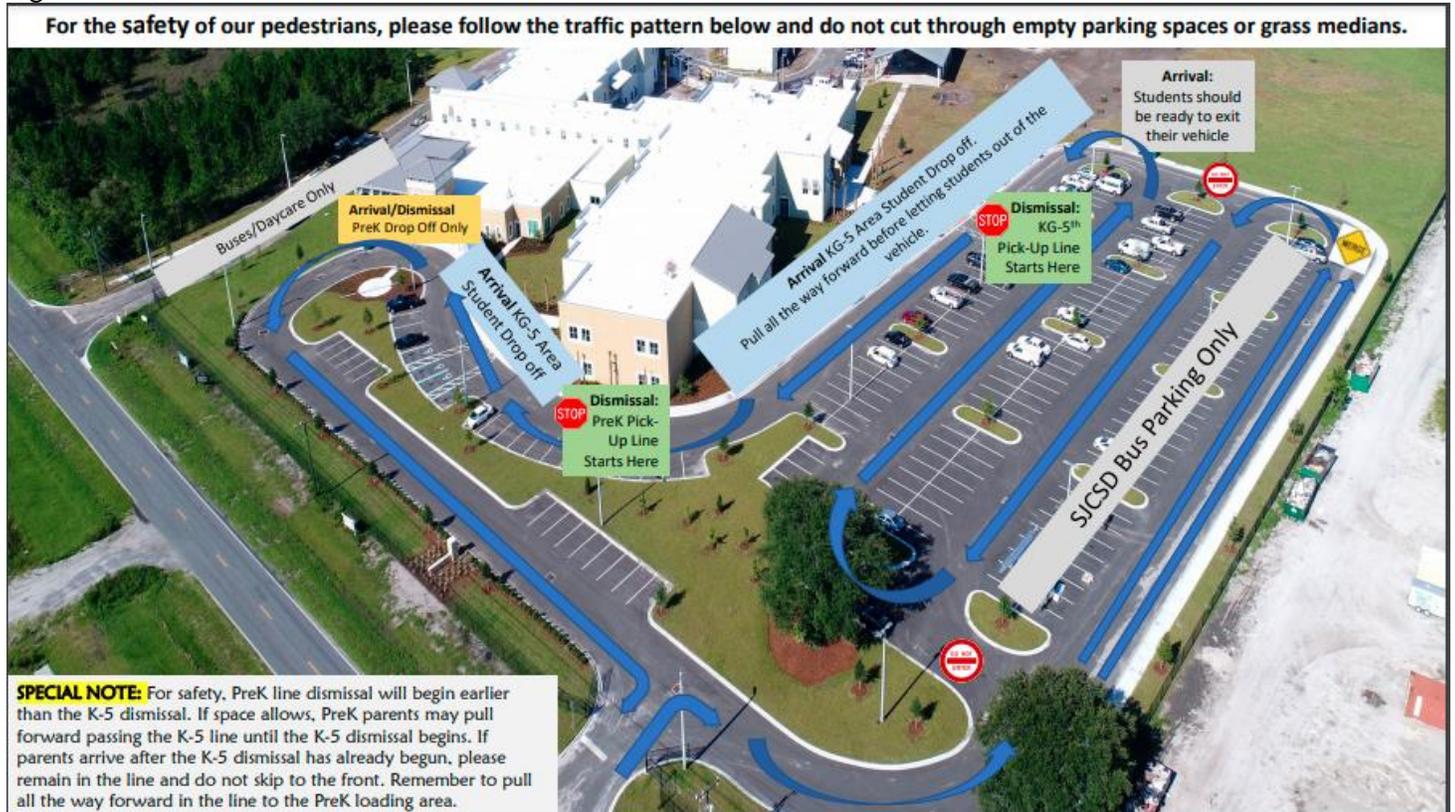
**Parent Pick-Up:** Parents picking up children in the car line must always remain in their vehicle for safety. Be sure to pull all the way forward until the line stops. Both the front and side parking lot entrances of the school are used to expedite student arrival. Students should be ready to get out of the vehicle at either entrance. Students may only enter/exit cars on the passenger side (this is for student safety). A school issued hanging sign or name plate listing children's names and grade levels needs to be displayed hanging from the rear-view mirror. Cell phone use, except for hands free technology, is prohibited in the car line. This procedure is for the utmost safety of the children. School starts at 8:25 a.m. and students are considered tardy if they are not in the building by 8:25 a.m. Due to the volume of car riders, please plan accordingly to have your child to school on time. If you arrive after 8:25 a.m., parents should park and walk their child(ren) into the school. Students who arrive at school before 7:50 a.m. must be enrolled in the PCE before-care program. Students must never be dropped-off prior to 7:50 a.m. and left unsupervised by their parent/guardian. Students will walk to their classroom independently. Staff and safety patrols are positioned throughout the campus, on morning duty, to supervise and assist students.

**\*Special Note for Arrival** - PreK students utilizing the car line shall be dropped off at the front of the car line. Please remain in the line and pull forward until you reach the front of the PPU line, remain in your vehicle.

**Please place your child's car seat on the passenger side of your vehicle. Ensure that you have your PRE-K Parent Pick-Up tag hanging from your rear-view mirror.**

Students will be met by a staff member and escorted to the classroom.

Figure 1.a Arrival Procedures PCES



### Attendance

Regular school attendance is a necessary part of a student's education. Excessive absences impair a student's educational progress, impacts whether the student passes or fails a grade, and may result in court proceedings. Students will be considered absent when they miss 50% of their school day. The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized. All students should be in school every day that they are physically able. It is extremely difficult to successfully keep up with class work if attendance is irregular. Excused absences include: Personal illness, family emergency, death in the family, religious holidays of the student's established religious faith, required court or law agency appearances, public functions, state competitions, scheduled doctor or dentist appointments. Unexcused absences include: shopping trips, pleasure trips, suspension from school, appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency, truancy. For a complete list of excused and unexcused absences, students and parents should refer to the [Student Code of Conduct](#). When Absent: Any student who has been absent from

school must bring a note from a parent or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Notes and emails should include the following information: full name, teacher, and specific reason for the absence. Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. If your child is absent for two or more days, contact your child's teacher to arrange for the schoolwork your child has missed. For other absences, please notify the principal in writing prior to the absence. **Truancy:** A student may be deemed truant after (i) five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or (ii) ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period. After 15 days of absence, excused or unexcused, a student must have a doctor's verification for all subsequent absences due to illness. **Tardiness:** School begins at 8:25 am. Any student reporting to school after that time is tardy. Any tardy student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the front office to receive an admittance slip

before going to the classroom. If a student is a car rider and eats breakfast, it is recommended that they arrive before 8:10 a.m. to give them enough time to eat breakfast. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement. **Early dismissal:** Children will be released only to their parents or individuals approved by their parent in prior written communication. Remember a photo ID is required. Students may not be checked out later than 2:00 pm each day and 1:00 pm on Wednesdays, this is our time dedicated to dismissal preparation.

#### Before and After School Care

The Picolata Crossing Elementary Extended Day is a community service for students in grades K-5 who attend Picolata Crossing. Services will be provided through [Village Extended Day](#). Extended day information is also available through a link on the Picolata Crossing Website.

#### Birthdays

If you wish to bring in a birthday treat on your child's special day, it must be pre-approved by the classroom teacher. Due to food allergies, please check in with the classroom teacher in advance. Your child's homeroom teacher will provide an appropriate time for you to drop off the treat. All treats should be store bought and prepackaged. In addition, to help minimize classroom disruptions, please do not send in balloons.

#### Bus Regulations

Students are given the privilege of using the services of the St. Johns County School District for transportation to and from school as well as to and from field trips. Standards of discipline must be maintained at all times in order to satisfy safety requirements. Whenever a driver must direct his/her full attention away from the road, danger exists. No student will be allowed to endanger the other students on the bus. Cell phones and other digital devices are not to be used and must remain in the off position to and from school. Parents are not to board the bus at any time. A complete list of bus regulations is available in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

#### Cafeteria Prices/Payment

Elementary, menus are available on [MealViewer Schools](#). This system greatly enhances our school lunch menus by providing photos and nutritional information of the menu items, as well as a Spanish language version of the menus. General Information about Food and Nutrition Services can be found at: [SJCS food/guide](#) A La Carte Items: Picolata Crossing provides several a la carte items in the cafeteria. These will vary throughout the year and more information will be released as the school year begins.

Parental Restrictions: Restrictions can be placed on your student's meal account by requesting, in writing, the restrictions. Once restrictions are placed, they can only be removed by the parent in a written letter/email to the food service manager.

Payments: Students may bring cash or check to pay for lunch or make pre-payments to the student's meal account with VISA, MasterCard or Discover credit card through the PayPams online system. For cash or check, please indicate the student's name and meal account number. For more information on PayPams, check your First Day Folder or access their website at: <https://www.paypams.com> or call 1- 888-994-5100.

Free and Reduced Applications: Parents are encouraged to complete one application per family. Please return the application to the school where the youngest child is enrolled. The approval process can take up to ten (10) days to complete. They are available at the school and [online](#).

Food Allergies: If your child has food allergies, please provide the school nurse with a physician's note indicating the allergies and appropriate medical attention required. Refunds: Refunds are addressed at the school level and require a written request. Please

contact the food service manager for a refund. Account Balances: Student account balances can be obtained on the website at [paypams.com](http://paypams.com) at no charge to you. Your student's account balance, either positive or negative, from the previous school year will roll into the new school year unless a refund has been requested. There will be no charging of any a la carte food items including entrees or snacks. If a negative balance exists, you will be notified in the communication folder.

### Cafeteria Rules

**Always Walk:** Relax, take your time, and walk. **Sit Properly:** Bottoms down, feet under the table, body facing your food, and keep your hands and feet to yourself.

**Use Quiet Voices:** It's great to visit with the friends sitting next to you, remember that you are inside and need to use "sound" judgment.

**Use Your Manners:** Please eat neatly, clean up after yourself, and respect other people and their property. Use "please" and "thank you" when addressing both adults and classmates.

**Raise Your Hand:** Please raise your hand for help or to get permission to get up from your seat.

**No Sharing Food:** Many of our students have food allergies or other food restrictions. Please keep your food to yourself.

**No Toys:** Toys are great for home, but not in the cafeteria.

### Cell Phones

Students may possess cell phones and other wireless communication devices at school, on buses, and at school functions. However, they must be turned off, stored in student's backpack. The device shall not be used during the school day without administrative approval or on school buses to and from school. Failure to comply may result in the device being confiscated. Repeated failure to comply will be considered defiance of school rules. PCES is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Parents, for the safety of our

children, staff and visitors, **please refrain from the use of cell phones during parent drop off and pick up.**

### Class Size Amendment

The St. Johns County School District is required by the state of Florida to fully implement the Class Size Amendment (CSA). The CSA requires that core classes not exceed the following ratio/numbers of students in specific grade levels:

Pre-K – Grade 3      18 students

Grade 4 – Grade 8    22 students

Our school district utilizes certified teachers as associate teachers as one method to meet the Class Size Amendment.

### Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow the St. Johns County School District Student Code of Conduct. Additional student information is provided in the Code of Conduct.

### Dismissal Procedures

Please refer back to the arrival procedures map (Figure 1.a) for a visual. K-5 parents are asked to remain behind the cones in the car line until the PreK PPU dismissal is complete. Our PreK students are dismissed earlier for safety. The K-5 Parent Pick-Up (PPU) line will begin at 2:45. The passenger back door of your vehicle will be opened for you. Please remain in your vehicle. After your child has entered the vehicle and the door is closed, please pull forward past the flag pole beyond the merge lane if you need to adjust the car seat straps or seatbelt.

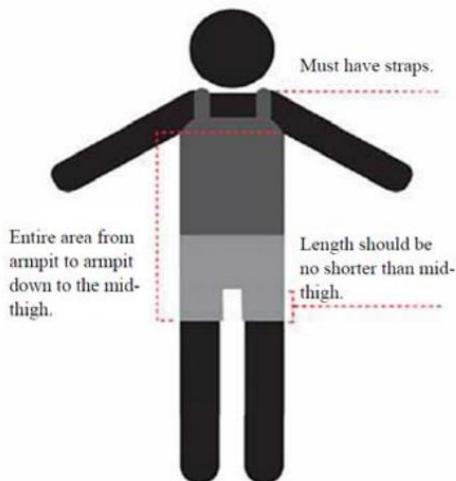
**\*Special Note for Dismissal** – PreK students utilizing the Parent Pick-Up (PPU) line will be picked-up at the front of the line starting at 2:20. Students will be waiting with teachers and paraprofessionals. The passenger back door of your vehicle will be opened for you. Please remain in your vehicle. After your child has entered the vehicle and the door is closed, please pull forward past the flagpole beyond the merge lane if you need to adjust the car seat straps or seatbelt. If parents arrive after the K-5 dismissal has already begun, please remain in the line and do not skip to the front. Be

sure to pull all the way forward in the line to the PreK loading area. PreK students with older siblings will wait inside the building until their sibling is dismissed at 2:45. Older siblings will join PreK students in their designated pick-up area. Ensure that you have your Parent Pick-Up tag hanging from your rear-view mirror.

### Dress Code

The dress and grooming of our students should contribute to the health and safety of the individual, promote a positive educational environment and not disrupt the educational activities and processes of the school. Picolata Crossing Elementary follows the school district's dress code guidelines explained in [the Student Code of Conduct](#). Clothing must cover areas from one armpit to the other armpit, down to the mid-thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps and be long enough to adequately cover the waistline and not expose the midriff. Of most importance to our elementary students are:

- Students must wear shoes that are safe and appropriate for the learning environment. All shoes and sandals must have a back or strap on the heel.
- Caps, hats, and sunglasses shall not be worn within the building, although they are acceptable outdoors for sun protection.
- For special events and occasions, the principal may choose to modify dress code policies. (For example, Pajama Day or Hat Day celebrations.)



### Emergency Drills

Emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year. We conduct monthly fire and lockdown drills as required by the Florida law. We will also practice drills for the following scenarios: severe weather and evacuation. Our school district also requires bus evacuation drills for our bus riders. Safety is of the utmost importance.

### Home Access Center

The Home Access Center (HAC), is a web-based application that is part of our Student Information System called eSchoolPlus. Please visit the website below to access or sign up for an account.

<https://homeaccess.stjohns.k12.fl.us>

*This system will be utilized for parents to access reports cards in grades K-5.* It also provides 3-5 parents and students with a daily summary page, schedule and attendance, discipline information, class work, and test scores. If you are new to the St. Johns County School District and need assistance setting up an account, please contact our Registrar/Data Operator, Patricia Brown.

### Homework

Homework plays an essential role in students' overall academic achievement. Homework can be effective when used to reinforce skills that students have demonstrated mastery of in the classroom. At PCE, students and parents should expect approximately 10 minutes per grade level of homework across all subjects. Parents play an important role in supporting homework. Below are several ways (not inclusive) parents can support homework.

- Communicate with the teacher about student performance, progress, homework.
- Specify regular time for homework, establish structures for time use.
- Structure homework within the flow of family life
- Reinforce and reward student's homework efforts, completion, correctness.

### Instructional Time

Preserving and maximizing instructional time is a priority at PCE. If parents need to contact their child during instructional hours, a message will be taken at the front office and given to your child at an appropriate time.

Communication with the teacher is critical. Please allow 24-48 hours for teachers to respond to parent inquiries. Keep in mind the response will occur outside of instructional time. For emergencies, please contact the front desk.

### Items Brought to School

**Animals:** No animals should be brought on to the school campus, unless they are approved service animals.

**Toys:** Toys should not be brought to school. Bringing a toy gun or any other weapon to school could result in disciplinary action.

**Equipment:** lacrosse sticks, baseball bats, hee-lies, roller blades, and other similar items may not be brought to school for any reason.

**Personal Electronic Device:** Students and/or Visitors Requesting a Waiver for Personal Electronic Property: Students and visitors requesting to operate their personal electronic property within the district must obtain written approval by completing the Waiver for Personal Electronic Property found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). This waiver must be signed by the school or district department administrator prior to operating any equipment in the St. Johns County School District schools or offices. Any student or visitor operating personal electronic equipment must also sign the Acceptable Use Procedures Agreement form, also located in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Picolata Crossing Elementary School is not responsible for the loss of any electronic devices.

### Lost and Found

Please put your child's name in all clothing, backpacks, jackets, sweaters, water bottles, and lunchboxes. In the event that your child does misplace an item they can check the 'Lost and Found' for lunch boxes and clothing. Articles such as glasses and jewelry will be placed in the front office. Unclaimed articles are periodically

donated to organizations that support those in need.

### Medication

If a child needs to take a prescribed medication during the school day, a parent or guardian must bring the original bottle of medication to the clinic and complete a Medication Authorization form. A Medication Form is also required for dispensing over the counter drugs such as Tylenol or cough syrup.

### Physical Education/Activities

To ensure the safety of our children during physical activity, it is highly recommended that every child wear socks and sneakers to school. Children will participate in some type of physical activity on a daily basis. On days where students have PE, it is important that they are not wearing crocs, sandals, boots, ballerina flats or flip flops which can present a safety risk during these more rigorous activities. Water bottles are always recommended for outside activities.

### Pillars of Character and Leadership

At Picolata Crossing Elementary, the St. Johns County Pillars of Character and student leadership are considered to be vitally important to our students' development. Incorporating these practices within our school environment and curriculum helps students become caring contributors to society and equips them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Critical skills and characteristics such as: trustworthiness, motivation, problem solving skills, goal setting, personal responsibility and the value of teamwork are embedded throughout the school day.

### **Character Counts Pillars**

Picolata Crossing Elementary school supports the St. John's County Character Counts Program and celebrates students showing the following character traits:

<b>Trustworthiness</b>	<b>Respect</b>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Fairness</b>
<b>Caring</b>	<b>Citizenship</b>

For more information, you can visit our district page at [Character Counts! in St. Johns County](#).

### Puma Patio (Courtyard)

Weather permitting, parents/guardians may visit their child during lunch and sit at the designated courtyard table(s). Due to limited space, safety, and supervision, your student may not invite a friend to eat at the parent/student table courtyard area. Please arrive 10 minutes prior to your child's scheduled lunch time. The front office will provide procedures for using the courtyard to meet with your child.

### School Advisory Council (SAC)

The School Advisory Council is a state-mandated organization that allows for school-based management and accountability. An improvement plan is developed each year, largely composed of defined areas of growth based on school data. The School Advisory Council is made up of faculty, parents, and other members of the school community. SAC meetings will be announced at a later date.

### School Messenger

School Messenger is a rapid phone, email, and/or text notification system provided by our school district to communicate important or emergency information efficiently. This system will be used for providing accurate information to parents/guardians about safety and daily attendance, as well as communication from the principal. These messages are for time urgent information. We ask that do not block the number or opt. out and that you maintain current phone numbers on file so we can make sure these messages are reaching our families in case of urgent or emergency situations.

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schoolmessenger/>

### Transportation Changes

If you need to make a transportation change for your child it must be in writing. Please send a written note to your child's teacher that morning. In addition, email [pces-notifications@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:pces-notifications@stjohns.k12.fl.us) (a link is on our school website) with any transportation changes. Please remember that only adults you have approved through prior written communication may pick up your child. We apologize for any inconvenience, but the safety of our children is our number one priority.

### Videos, Photographs, Recordings

Students, parents and visitors are not allowed to videotape, photograph or make audio recordings while on school premises except for Open House and public events (including plays, musicals, fairs, fundraisers, and awards). All recording devices must be turned off at school. The purpose of this general rule is to foster an appropriate educational environment, prevent unwarranted disclosure of student images and information, and to comply with the requirements of the negotiated agreement with the St. Johns Education Association.

### Volunteers

We are delighted and grateful to have parent volunteers in our school. Please be sure you have been cleared and then make arrangements with your child's teacher to schedule a time and activity for you to help with. Volunteer service opportunities and coordination vary by teacher. Please contact your child's teacher for specific classroom information. This includes events, guest speakers, and field trips. All visitors must sign in through the KeepNTrack system in the front office.