



The Pilot School
Unlocking the Potential[®]



Community Handbook

2023-2024

Our Mission

The Pilot School cultivates the abilities of students who learn differently by providing the strategic tools, guidance, and structure needed to confidently learn and achieve. Our students develop the curiosity, motivation, and resourcefulness necessary to flourish in many environments and pursuits.

Pilot School Community Norms

The Pilot School Community Norms were developed to guide the mindsets and behaviors of those who work at Pilot. In living out these norms everyday, we recognize their utility for all members of our community and are sharing them here for that reason.

Be curious

We always ask why. Whether it be a lesson that went awry, a friend having a difficult moment, an emotional community member, a meeting that didn't go well, or an issue with a colleague, before assigning judgment, we ask why. We must also remain professionally curious. Whether it be reading books, attending professional development sessions, listening to podcasts, or attending webinars, we should always remain internally motivated, active learners.

Keep an elevated gaze.

We think in terms of maximum potential, both for the organization and every individual inside it. With our eyes set upward, we are able to avoid the distractions of singular incidents. We talk about ideas, not people. We strive for the absolute best, not simply doing well, and we keep going, efforting toward an ever-moving target. Our students and parents deserve this.

Do what has to be done.

Through a shared commitment to Pilot's success, we all take responsibility for the work that has to get done. We stick with problems until they are solved, we clean up messes we come upon, we invest the time, energy, and our individual strengths to bridge gaps, create something out of nothing, leave Pilot better than we found it.

Value every voice.

We recognize that every member of the Pilot community, from students to board members, faculty and staff to parents, alumni to outside constituents, has the potential to teach us. We can only learn from them by actively listening, seeking clarity, withholding judgment, and holding space for diverse perspectives.

Give the benefit of the doubt.

Rather than rest on assumptions, we always go to the source to find clear and true information. If we must rest on assumptions though, let them be positive ones. When in question, assume the best in a person or event. Actively seek a positive narrative, one in which the situation is fair, the players are noble, and the intentions are good.

Lead with compassion and empathy.

In all our interactions, whether they be with students, parents, or faculty, we use the "platinum rule": treat others the way they wish to be treated. We invest the time to discern how people are feeling and what emotions are driving their behaviors, and we enter into each interaction with an open heart, always acting with kindness, respect, and honesty.

Be vulnerable.

As a community of active learners, we remain open to admitting what we don't know or didn't get right, trusting that our teammates will not hold it against us, but rather support us as we seek the knowledge we need to grow. We recognize the necessity of vulnerability for our organization and, consequently, hold it in the highest esteem. Not only are we responsible for exposing our own vulnerabilities, but we are responsible for creating a safe space for others to do the same.

Academic School Calendar 2023-2024

The school calendar is kept up to date on the school's website. You can access it at pilotschool.org/events.

School Hours

Full days are **8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.** (drop off begins at 7:15 a.m.)

Half days are **8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** (drop off begins at 7:15 a.m.)

Arrival

School begins at 8:00 a.m., and our campus opens at 7:15 a.m. Between 7:15 and 7:55 students gather together to enjoy games, outside activities, and time to chat with friends before starting their school day. Pilot staff help engage and monitor students during this early morning time. We encourage students to bring books, sketch pads, journals, and quiet activities to occupy their time during the wait time between drop off and dismissal to homeroom.

All students should enter through the main entrance. Please pull up to the main entrance and stop the car so your child can safely exit the car. Children who can successfully exit the car with all their belongings and walk into school independently develop a sense of pride and accomplishment. If possible, stay in your vehicle and help promote that independence.

Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:00 p.m. When arriving for pick-up, Lower Division students use the inside lane closest to the main building, and Middle and Upper Division students use the middle and outside lanes closest to the parking lot. If you have multiple students in different divisions, please follow the procedure for your youngest child's division. Please pull all the way forward in line and remain in your car. Display your Pilot family name card in the window so it is clearly visible. A Pilot staff member will identify your car. When your child approaches your car, a staff member will help with the door if it is needed. Remaining in the car is helpful. Please drive safely in the car line and be patient. If you need to buckle your child, please pull into our parking lot once you leave the car line and safely help your child. This allows for a continuous safe flow of traffic.

If your child needs an early dismissal, please email parentinfo@pilotschool.org and/or call the main office at (302) 478-1740. We will have your child ready at the main office for dismissal. You will need to pull around to the main entrance, enter the main office, and sign out your child.

If you arrive late for pick-up, please call the main office as well. Students will wait in the main office and will exit the main school doors. At 3:15, students who have not been picked up will be dismissed to Kids Club and a charge will incur.

Bus Transportation

For families who take advantage of school buses for transportation, parents are responsible for contacting the Bus Company directly in the case of any change to their child's transportation to or from school (e.g., absence, early dismissal, dual custody arrangements).

Absences

The importance of consistent and timely classroom attendance is vital for the learning process and a priority advocated by The Pilot School. It is an essential component for learning to take place and educational growth to be maximized, and it establishes the organizational routine so important to students. Students begin instruction at the start of homeroom (8:00 am), so late arrivals result in lost instructional time.

We understand that there will be absences. Please call the main office (302) 478-1740 or email parentinfo@pilotschool.org if your child will be absent, late, or have an early dismissal for any reason.

When your child returns to school, please send doctor notes to our Nurse, Danielle Munroe, at dmunroe@pilotschool.org. If you plan an absence, we encourage our students to read daily, practice math fluency, and keep a journal. Teachers will not provide additional school work for absences. Missed work for excused absences will need to be completed in a timely manner. Please discuss this with your child's teacher or Division Head.

Parent Notification System

We will occasionally utilize Pilot's telephone and emergency email communication system to alert parents about school closings and other pertinent information. In order to receive these phone calls, please keep us updated about any phone number or email changes. In the event of a contact information change, please update Magnus and also send an email to parentinfo@pilotschool.org.

Health and Wellness

The Pilot School utilizes Magnus Health for student health records. Parents should keep all health information including emergency contacts, medication changes, immunizations, physical exams, allergies, etc. up to date in Magnus. A physical exam is required annually. Please email the school nurse with health and medication changes that impact your child.

For the benefit of all of our children and staff, please do not send your child to school if they have experienced any of the following symptoms:

- ❖ Fever of 100.4 F or above (or symptoms like alternating shivering and sweating)
- ❖ Persistent cough
- ❖ Vomiting or diarrhea

Children must be fever free without medicine for 24 hours before returning to school. Vomiting and diarrhea need to have stopped for 24 hours before returning to school as well as students tolerating their regular food diet.

Kids Club and After School Clubs

Kids Club is our after school program. Students enjoy an after school snack, games, crafts, swimming and special activities with their Pilot peers. You can access the registration for Kids Club on our school website at pilotschool.org/community/parents/. Families can take advantage of Kids Club on a daily, weekly, or drop-in basis. Please see the website for more details about relevant fees.

We also offer a Homework Club. Homework Club is led by Pilot faculty and separated by division. You can attend Homework Club only or as part of Kids Club attendance.

A variety of afterschool clubs and activities take place throughout the school year. Please check the Pilot Post and the parent page on our website to learn about these exciting additions to our school day.

School Dress Code

We embrace a dress code for several reasons. Dress codes are a physical reminder of “school mode” and elevate the learning space. Just as adults dress up for work, Pilot students dress up for school. A dress code also reduces the possibility of social conflicts or peer pressure that can arise from wardrobe choices, and it levels the playing field by de-emphasizing attention to potentially expensive fashion trends.

That said, we choose a dress code, not a uniform, so that students may have some freedom for personal choice and expression, and we encourage you to include your child in the selection of their clothing.

Students, with the help of parents when necessary, should choose clothes that are clean, free of holes and tears, appropriately fitting, and comfortable for learning. Please do not wear logos and graphics that are provocative, divisive, or inappropriate for a school environment. Children should see their clothing choices as a facet of studentship in the same way that adult dress is a facet of professionalism.

Any student who may be uncertain if an item is appropriate for school, should ask for assistance from the school *before* wearing it.

Students (and families) are also encouraged to wear Pilot gear as a way to show school pride . You can find Pilot gear at our school store at the link below

<https://sideline.bsnsports.com/schools/delaware/wilmington/the-pilot-school>

****It is suggested that every student have at least one item with the Pilot logo for school spirit days or special events. There are also many Pilot logo-embroidered items at the school clothing exchange.**

FOR SWIMMING, STUDENTS WILL NEED AT ALL TIMES:

1. Towel
2. Swim Suit (*please choose a swimsuit that provides coverage and support appropriate for active play*)
3. Goggles are optional

Please mark your child's name on every item of his/her clothing – shirts, pants, underwear, all swim clothes, shoes, gloves, hats, sweaters, coats, etc. **Unclaimed clothing will be distributed to local charities at the end of the school year.**

Classroom Placements

Your child will be assigned a Homeroom teacher and teachers for Reading, Language Arts, and Math. Please note that these placements may change as we develop the best individualized program for your child. Division heads will contact you regarding placement changes. Thank you for your partnership and flexibility as we develop the right program for your child.

Homework

At The Pilot School, homework is designed to be independent work that practices skills already learned. When assigned, homework develops independence, confidence and responsibility. Homework will not focus on new skills, but rather aim to build fluency in reading and math. Homework is also a time to build study skills.

Parents can help by providing a distraction free study area and supplies needed to complete homework assignments. Completing homework after a physical activity like playing, athletics, or jumping can positively impact focus and productivity. Giving students a choice about when they want to complete their homework is also powerful. If your student is still having trouble completing homework, consider signing up for Homework Club!

If students are having difficulty completing homework assignments, we encourage them to be an advocate for their learning and speak directly to their teacher to develop a homework plan.

If students forget their homework, they may call a friend for help or speak with their teacher at the beginning of the school day. Teachers will not send forgotten homework home via email if students forget. Allowing your child to problem solve and speak with their teacher will build confidence, responsibility, and self-advocacy.

Homework that is incomplete will need to be completed the following school day. Students, teachers, and heads will find an appropriate time in which a student can complete their missing homework. Teachers, parents and students work collaboratively on the homework front, finding a balance of what is best practice while keeping all accountable.

Individualized homework plans can be arranged via teacher or Division Head if needed.

Students are encouraged to read at least 20 minutes a night and may utilize *Learning Ally*. All Pilot students have a Learning Ally account and access to other learning resources. Teachers will provide login credentials at the beginning of the school year.

Middle Division and Upper Division: Student planners and binders will be used in the Middle Division and Upper Division. Students are responsible to write their homework assignments down daily. Teachers may communicate important news from the day in your child's planner. The student planner serves as a tool for daily feedback as well as a communication tool with your child's teachers, should either of you need to jot down a note.

Use of Electronic Devices

Pilot School students may not use cell phones during the school day for personal use. If a student has a cell phone, it will be placed in a basket on their teachers' desk for the school day and can be picked up at

the end of the day. Exceptions do arise for instructional purposes. In the case of an emergency, the teacher will bring the basket of phones with them to our designated gathering space. If you have a change in dismissal or any important information that needs to be communicated with your child please call the main office.

Chrome books will be used at school. Each child will have a school email account and Google classroom.

Snack/Morning Recess

All Lower and Middle Division students will have a scheduled morning snack and recess time daily. It is encouraged that **students pack one healthy snack** item along with a drink to school each day. **Refillable water bottles** are a must for the day. Please send your child in with a refillable water bottle each day. We have refilling water stations in each hallway.

Weather permitting, recess breaks will take place outdoors throughout the school year. Please encourage your child to dress accordingly.

Lunch and Milk Program

Families can take advantage of our hot lunch program through Yay Lunch! We also offer separate Milk Purchase options from local Hy-Point Farm. Ordering information can be found on our website.

Celebrations

The Pilot School Home and School Association (HSA) will ask for a volunteer for a Parent Representative for each classroom. These representatives will work directly with classroom teachers and/or Division Heads to coordinate parties and special events throughout the school year. An example of a request might be to coordinate a special snack during a Valentine's party or help with a special lunch duty. Dietary restrictions will be taken into consideration when planning parties with food. Please consider volunteering for this role as it will provide the opportunity to become involved and connected.

We ask that any invitation to outside school parties be distributed outside of school and not hand-delivered at school. We have found that when invitations are brought to school, hurt feelings can result.

What to bring to school

- Change of clothes to keep at school (Lower Division only)
- A clean pair of sneakers to keep at school for PE class (All Students)
- A sweater or sweatshirt that follows dress code
- Rubber boots or hiking boots
- Swimsuit, towel, goggles
- Snack and lunch
- Refillable water bottle
- A book or magazine that you are reading

What to leave at home

We encourage students to leave **toys, stuffed animals, trading cards and other non- school items** at home, as they become distractions for students and other classmates, and the School cannot guarantee the safekeeping and safe return of outside items. If your child needs helpful tools for learning, our therapists, teachers, and division heads can help to find appropriate items that students may use as tools for learning in the classroom. The Pilot School has plenty of visual and tactile fidgets, adaptive seats, and movement breaks built into the day to help prepare students for extended learning time. Individual exceptions can be discussed, but please contact your child's Division Head prior to sending your child in with an outside item.

There will be special times built into our calendar when your child will be asked to bring a game from home, a favorite toy, award, or creation to share with our community. Please look for correspondence from your child's teacher on when these times will occur. If you have something special that your child would like to share on a specific day, please contact your child's teacher.

Communication

It is our goal to build a strong partnership with each family at The Pilot School. Each week, Dr. Williams will send the **Pilot Post** electronically to emails provided through our school records. **Please carefully read this correspondence weekly, as it is a vital part of our school communication.** Previous issues of the **Pilot Post** can be found on our website.

Division Heads will also use Google Sites, linked weekly in the *Pilot Post*, as a source of communication throughout the year. Please check your email regularly or you may miss out on important information. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns. You may also contact Division Heads. We look forward to building a partnership with you and your child.

Progress Reports/Conferences

Progress reports are electronically distributed three times a year in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Teachers, Therapists, and Specialists will report on your children's individual program and the progress they are making toward their goals. Priority goals, support for achievement, observed strengths and challenges, emotional skills sets, work habits, curriculum overviews and student performance will be addressed in detail.

Families will have the opportunity to formally conference with their child's teachers, therapists, specialists, and other school staff twice a year. These days are built into our calendar and you will have the opportunity to schedule time to discuss your child's program and progress at those specific dates. **This year Parent Teacher/Staff conferences are scheduled for November 9th and 10th and May 4th and 5th.**

Division Heads are regularly available to help discuss programming and progress throughout the year when conferences are not being held. Please feel free to contact them at any time throughout the school year.

Prohibited Categories

The following items, practices, or behaviors that impede the safety of the school and learning community are prohibited on campus, inside or outside the building, and on field trips or at school-sponsored events:

- Weapons of any kind, including guns, knives, slingshots, ammunition, explosives, makeshift weapons, or pretend-play weapons.
- Illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products.
- Student consumption of energy drinks.

Community Norms and Restorative Justice

Our school community norms are shared above because of their importance. Each individual at school lives by our norms. We practice restorative justice, which empowers students to resolve conflict with help, on their own and in small groups. Using teacher and peer mediated small groups to ask questions, air grievances, be heard, solve problems and repair harm, our community is united and stronger. The Pilot community is mindful of our norms and repairs harm while building trust. When conflict arises, restorative justice helps for equal opportunity for sharing and listening, use of “I” statements, learning to take responsibility for one's action, repairing harm with action and building strong relationships. Our community norms are posted around our building and incorporated into our learning environment. Please share them in your home and community.