

Parent Partnerships

Issue 3 December, 2023



**“Stand Up For Pride” logo designed by
Tahmari Farrell, 8th grade**

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Save the Dates!

**Tuesday-Thursday, Dec
5th- 7th**

School Wide Interim Assessment #2 (please ensure your children get a good night's rest, arrive at school on time, eat a nourishing breakfast and encourage them to be determined to complete each question and do their very best).

Thursday, December 7th

Parent-Teacher Report Card Conference Night & Mental Health & Community Resources Fair in the Common Room: 3:35-6:00PM

Friday, December 8th

Half-Day 12:30PM dismissal for students/staff-Mental Health Day

Tuesday, December 12th

Half-Day 12:30PM dismissal for students/ Professional Development Day

**Thursday, December
14th**

Kwanzaa In-Person Celebration at 5:30pm in the Great Room

Friday, December 22nd

Philanthropy Day & Half-Day / 12:30pm Dismissal for Winter Break/ First Trimester Honors Awards Assemblies

Month of December

During the month of December, Nurse Agbere will be absent from school. We will have a sub-coverage nurse on some of the days, but not all. Please ensure your emergency contacts are up-to-date and available to pick up your child if necessary.

Wednesday, January 3rd

School Re-opens Wednesday January 3rd

Letter to families from Ms Brower & Mrs Thomas

On behalf of the PRIDE Academy Charter School (PRIDE) Administration and staff, we hope that this message finds our students and their families doing well as we rapidly approach the end of the year. Our admiration and respect for the work and dedication of our teachers, the hard work of our students, and the high expectations, caring and partnership shared with our families grows each day. It comes as no surprise that PRIDE enjoys a strong and well-deserved reputation and that many of our families enroll more than one child and recommend our school to their family and friends.

We have enjoyed a positive and strong start to the 2023 - 2024 school year. As we begin the second trimester, it is good to take time to revisit and review expectations for school. For context and perspective, Pride Academy Charter School has 300 students arriving each day who spend 7+ hours and longer, for those involved in clubs, activities, and sports, here. Overall, our students are found to be polite, thoughtful, respectful and engaged in their studies. Please continue to take pride in your children and the way in which you are raising them.

That being understood, as we approach Winter Break and the heightened level of excitement that occurs around this time of year, now is an opportune time to discuss with your children the PRIDE Academy Charter School Student Code of Conduct and continued expectations regarding student behavior choices. PRIDE Academy Charter School students MAY NOT:

- Fight, play fight, hit, hit back, wrestle or roughhouse in any manner. Students must keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- Students may not engage in physical displays of affection, kissing, hugging, handholding, etc. These are inappropriate for school and may result in a complaint of sexual harassment involving one participant against the other or witness complaints against one or both participants.
- Engage in name calling, roasting, or any type of harassment, intimidation, or bullying or any actions, whether verbal, physical, in-person, or online, that are demeaning, harassing, hurtful, embarrassing or hateful. This includes, but is not limited to actions based on religion, gender, body type, gender expression, sexual orientation, real or perceived ability or disability, culture, race or ethnicity. They may not refer to peers as any type of animal or call them anything other than their given name. Pride Academy Charter School has clear policy and procedures in place and they have been well covered with our students. Please follow this link to the **PRIDE Academy Charter School Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct** [<https://prideacs.org/policies-reports/>]. Please read the Handbook and discuss it with your child.
- Bring drugs, nicotine, prohibited substances or related paraphernalia or packaging to school, use prohibited substances in school, on school grounds or at school events, or attend school under the influence or bearing evidence of exposure to prohibited substances. Please see our **Drugs, Alcohol, Nicotine & Tobacco policy** in our **[Parent Handbook, Page 33]**
- Bring weapons or other prohibited items to school. Please refer to our **Parent Handbook and Student Code of Coconduct, Pages 19-20 "Not Allowed in School"**.

All students must abide by the following:

- All students should have purchased a front dial combination lock and have an assigned school locker by now. Cell phones must be placed in the student's own locker and kept there until dismissal. Students may not carry cell phones on their person during the school day or in backpacks/purses or fanny packs. If cell phones are brought to school, they may not be used in school at any time (including before school and after school activities and during classes, transitions in hallways, restroom visits, lunch and recess) and must remain locked up in lockers. Cell phones will be confiscated due to lack of compliance with our expectations. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones. **[Parent Handbook, Page 9]**
- We strongly recommend that your child does not allow other students to use their cell phone and that they do not use another student's cell phone, especially to access their Social Media as this may allow other students access to their accounts. Additionally, students must not share their Social Media account passwords with other students and must immediately change any passwords that have been

shared in the past. Students will be held responsible for any negative impact arising from postings/tags etc on or sent from their Social Media account(s).

- Students may not bring lunch or snacks that include nuts or nut products of any kind, shelled edible seeds, candy/chocolate bars, carbonated drinks, and they may not share food items.
- Students may not bring permanent markers for use in school and they may not use them anywhere in school including restrooms to deface school property. **[See Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, Page 17, "Not Allowed in School"]**
- Students must follow school practices with regard to their use of our school restrooms to respect the privacy of others, maintain a high level of cleanliness and sanitary conditions, and prevent the destruction of property, fixtures and plumbing:

1. They may only be inside the stalls by themselves and may never be in a stall with other individuals.
2. They may not stand on the commode or look over into other stalls, look under the stall doors/walls into other stalls, or look through cracks in between the door and stall walls into the stall.
3. They may not place items of food or other objects in the commodes or urinals.
4. They may not urinate or defecate on the floor instead of in the commode or the urinal.
5. They may not vandalize the walls, doors and other areas of the restroom with graffiti or anything else.
6. They may not enter the restroom with their cell phones to use their phones and/or to video record themselves or others.
7. They may not arrange with others to meet up or congregate in the restrooms at any time during the day including before homeroom or during class time, homeroom time, transitions, lunch/recess, and after school activities.

Please help us by adding your voice to these expectations. From time to time, we address poor choices made by our students and a student will say, "But, I didn't mean anything by it," or "I was just playing." Please reinforce that under school, state, and federal anti-bullying, anti-violence and anti-discrimination policies and laws, intent does not matter, only actions do.

Students and family members are encouraged to reach out to Robin Brower, Dean of Students and District Anti-Bullying Coordinator (rbrower@prideacs.org), or Fiona Thomas, Principal (fthomas@prideacs.org) if they need to make a report or have a concern. More information can be found on our school webpage [www.prideacs.org]. We remain open to helping our families navigate the sometimes rocky waters of childhood.

A proactive conversation now at home can help avoid uncomfortable situations and accountability consequences for your child at school. Please reinforce our core values of Peace, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empathy. Speak with your child about the high expectations that you and we share, which are that all of our students will treat each other and all members of our school community with kindness, respect and dignity because we desire to keep PRIDE a safe, structured and positive school community where teaching and learning can continue to flourish.

As always, we are grateful for your support and we thank you for entrusting us with your children.

Robin Brower
Dean of Students & Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Fiona Thomas
Principal



Kwanzaa by Mrs Wilson

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African cultural holiday, which celebrates family, community and culture. It is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st and its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili, a Pan-African language which is the most widely spoken African language.

- ❖ Kwanzaa was first created to reaffirm and restore our rootedness in African culture. It is, therefore, an expression of recovery and reconstruction of African culture.
- ❖ Secondly, Kwanzaa was created to serve as a regular communal celebration to reaffirm and reinforce the bonds between us as a people. It was designed to be an ingathering to strengthen community and reaffirm common identity, purpose and direction as a people and a world community.
- ❖ Thirdly, Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce the Nguzo Saba (the Seven Principles.) These seven communitarian African values are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba, (Creativity), and Imani (Faith).

On **Thursday, December 14th at 5:30pm**, Pride Academy will host our annual Kwanzaa Celebration in-person in the Great Room! The theme for Kwanzaa this year will be centered on ***"Kuumba: Envision, Create, Inspire and Unite."*** We will be having performances from the Pride African Dance Ensemble, Dreamality Choir, and the Imani Choir, as well as the traditional lighting of the Kinara. Additionally, we will be joined by members of Imani Baptist Church in announcing the winners of the Imani & Pride Scholar Artist Exhibit People's Choice Awards Winners.

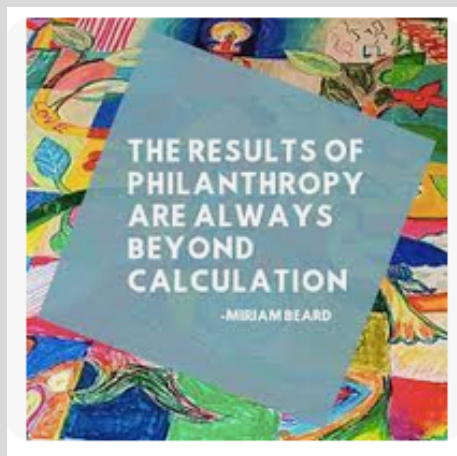
We look forward to sharing the spirit of peace, unity and community as we celebrate each other and appreciate our gifts and talents.



Report Card Parent-Teacher Conferences & Pick-Up

Report Cards will be distributed during Parent-Teacher Conferences on Thursday 12/7 between 3:35-6:00PM. Some tips and suggestion as report card conference nights approaches:

1. **Finding time to meet may be more difficult than usual.** You may have more to juggle these days, between your job, your child's learning, and other family demands. Your child's teacher is probably juggling many of the same things. If none of the proposed conference times work for you, please let the teacher know so thatm you can come up with a mutually convenient time to meet.
2. **You have essential information to share with your child's teacher.** You may be seeing strengths and struggles the teacher doesn't see. The more you share with your child's teacher, the more you can work together to help your child thrive. Your child's teacher may also ask you for specific feedback on their instruction. Please share what's working and what isn't.
3. **All questions are good questions.** You may have questions about your child's academic skills and progress and social-emotional well-being. You might want the teacher to show you how to get into PowerSchool, Google Classroom or another online platform. It's OK to ask about those things, too.
4. **Building a relationship with your child's teacher.** Use this meeting as a time to share your needs and also any positives. Teachers will appreciate your acknowledgement of their hard work and care for your children.



Philanthropy Day! by Ms Dumenigo

Active service has always been an integral part of Pride Academy Charter School's mission and vision. We work to empower our scholars to see themselves as leaders and change agents in their communities. They engage in a wide variety of service projects through their participation in school-wide food drives, service-learning classroom activities, and Project Pride. One of the major community service events at Pride Academy is our annual Philanthropy Day. **On Friday, December 22nd, Philanthropy Day will continue the tradition of service to others in need in our community and students will learn about the importance of active service through lessons, activities, and by actively engaging in a project that serves others.**

FAMILY PHILANTHROPY!

Parents and families are the first and most important teachers in every child's life. Please consider encouraging the values of giving and service in your children by implementing some of the strategies below.

- ❖ Support Philanthropy Day by donating items for the homeless at St. John the Divine in Newark and residents of the Isaiah House Shelter. **5th & 6th graders donate warm socks and 7th & 8th graders donate hats, gloves, scarves.**
- ❖ Join your child at Pride Academy during Philanthropy. Be part of our special day of service and work side by side with your child as they work on their assigned community service project. Please reach out to Ms Dumenigo at 973-672-3200 ext. 210 for more details.
- ❖ Find a cause that is important to you and your child, and make a small donation to that cause. For example, if your child loves animals, you might want to make a family donation to an animal rescue shelter.
- ❖ Learn about causes that affect your family and loved ones. If your family has someone who struggles with a health issue, find an organization that you can connect with and do something to serve that cause. For example, if you have a family member who is a veteran, you can write and/or send a holiday card to:

A Recovering American Soldier

C/O Walter Reed Army Medical Center

6900 Georgia Avenue NW Washington D.C. 20307-5001



Keeping Everyone Safe in School and at Home!

Here at Pride, we are continuing to take actions that reduce the spread of illnesses and COVID-19 so that we can all stay in school every day! We know that the virus that causes COVID-19 and flu is mostly spread during close contact by respiratory droplets released when people talk, sing, breathe, cough or sneeze. In addition to the steps that we are taking as a school with regard to increasing ventilation, air purification in classrooms and common areas, and cleaning and disinfection of frequently used surfaces, there are personal prevention practices that all scholars, staff and families are strongly recommended to follow. These include the following:

- ❖ Staying up to date with COVID-19 booster vaccinations and this year's Flu shot
- ❖ Staying home when sick with fever and cold/flu-like symptoms, vomiting and diarrhea
- ❖ Washing and/or sanitizing hands frequently
- ❖ Wearing masks is voluntary at this time. However, please be aware that we may move to universal mandatory mask wearing if COVID-19 levels rise in our county or district and/or if we begin to experience an increase in COVID-19 and Flu outbreaks in our school community.

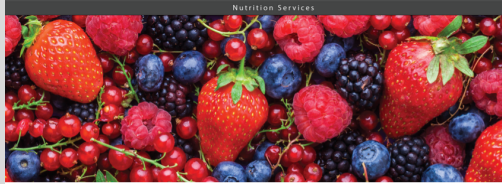
Information about vaccinations can be found [HERE](#) and also in the fliers attached to the Alert email message.

ELMWOOD AVE DROP OFF: Please review the procedure if you use the drop off lane on Elmwood Ave:

- Enter the cone marked drop off lane at the Elmwood Ave/Shepard Ave intersection and **pull your car forward as far down as you can** to the last cone by the Imani Church building in order to allow for more cars to pull in behind you.
- **The drop off lane will not be used as a parking zone between 7:00-9:00AM. Your child must be ready to quickly exit your car to avoid delay and a back up of cars behind your vehicle.**
- If you need to park in order to speak with your child or come into the school, **please park on the corner of Elmwood and Madonna Place or turn and park on Madonna Place.**
- **Avoid stopping at the entrance of the drop off lane** because there are cars ahead of you in the process of dropping off their child. **Please wait until the car in front of you pulls forward.**
- **Please DO NOT stop your car in the middle of the street on Elmwood Ave to drop off your child.** This will prevent blocking the road and your child will not have to cross through the drop off lane to get to the curb.
- Please try to avoid moving into the intersection if you notice that the drop off lane is full with cars. Wait until cars move up and you can see an available spot in the lane.
- **If you get caught in the intersection, please DO NOT have your child exit the car.** Instead, wait to use the drop off lane and then pull up as far as you can to the end of the lane to drop off safely.
- Always drop off your child at the curb of Elmwood Ave while your car is completely stopped in the coned marked drop off lane.
- If you are unable to enter the drop off lane, please continue to drive along Elmwood to drop off further along the block at Imani Church or around the corner on Madonna Pl.
- Please be careful exiting the drop off lane as you pull out into ongoing traffic on Elmwood Ave.

SHEPARD AVE DROP OFF: An additional drop off lane will be coned off on Shepard Ave on the school side of the road. If you choose to use this lane, please follow the procedures outlined below:

- **Enter the lane driving from the Rhode Island Ave corner**
- After exiting the Shepard Ave drop off lane, please drive directly across the intersection staying on Shepard Ave towards Central Ave or turn left onto Elmwood Ave past Central Presbyterian Church. **DO NOT make a right onto the Elmwood Ave towards our school or onto the Elmwood Ave drop lane.**
- Scholars dropped off on Shepard Ave should walk to the front of Pride and enter at the Main Entrance.
- **Enter the cone marked drop off lane and pull your car forward as far as you can to the last cone at the corner of Elmwood Ave/Shepard Ave to drop off your child.**
- **Please make sure your child is ready to quickly exit your car to avoid delay and back up of cars.**
- Please be careful exiting the drop off lane as you pull out into the intersection.



December Nutrition News!

Please visit our [Pride Academy school website](#) for information about our Breakfast and Lunch program and nutrition services. Students can order their lunch via an online portal and they will do this on a monthly basis. If you would like to support them in their ordering, please reach out to Ms Oates, our Main Office Coordinator.



December Breakfast 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 4 W/G Special K Cereal with W/g Graham Crackers W/G Graham Crackers Pineapple Cup 100% Apple Juice Milk	5 100% Fruit Punch w/g Corn Flakes Cereal with w/g Graham Crackers W/G Vanilla Bear Grahams Peach Applesauce Cup Milk	6 100% Tangerine Juice W/G Apple Cinnamon Muffin Flat Mandarin Orange Cup Milk	7 W/G Honey Scooters Cereal W/G Chocolate Loaf Fresh Orange Milk	8 100% Grape Juice W/G Superdonut Mixed Fruit Cup Milk
11 W/G Fruit Loops Cereal Blueberry Muffin Flat Fresh Apple Milk	12 Milk Applesauce Cup 100% Grape Juice W/G Cinnamon Raisin Bagel with Cream Cheese	13 W/G Cinnamon Raisin Bagel with Cream Cheese Fresh Orange Milk	14 W/G Krispy Rice Cereal Corn Muffin Diced Peach Cup 100% Strawberry Kiwi Juice	15 100% Apple Juice W/G Corn Chex Cereal Mixed Fruit Cup Milk
18 100% Grape Juice w/g Corn Flakes Cereal W/G Graham Crackers W/G Alphabet Snackable Peach Applesauce Cup Milk	19 W/G Apple Muffin Flat Fresh Orange Milk	20 100% Fruit Punch W/G Plain Bagel w/ Cream Cheese Mixed Fruit Cup Milk	21 Frosted Mini Wheat W/G Bran Muffin Fresh Apple Milk	22 100% Strawberry Kiwi Cereal W/G Poffitz Pancakes Diced Pear Cup Milk
25  NO SCHOOL!	26  NO SCHOOL!	27  NO SCHOOL!	28  NO SCHOOL!	29  NO SCHOOL!

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



December Alternate, Vegetarian & Hot Lunch 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 4 Turkey Beef Dippers with Black Bean, whole Wheat Dinner Rolls Hummus Cup with Mini Pretzels and Strawberry Yogurt Mini Cheese Quesadilla w/ Manchito Potatoes Milk	5 Turkey and Cheese on W/G Bread with sliced Cucumber w/ Dip All Beef Hot Burger on W/G Bun with Potato Medley W/G Bun W/G Dip Diced Carrots Fresh Apple Milk	6 Cheese Manicotti w/ meat sauce Cheese Manicotti w/ meat sauce Green Beans Beef Bologna & Cheese on Whole Grain Bread Fresh Banana Milk	7 W/G Fiesta Beef & Cheese Wrap, Cold Corn Cup Fresh Banana W/G Dip Turkey Meat and Sauce Cheese on W/G Potato Bun Potato Salad Cup Fresh Pear Milk	8 Domino's Pizza Slice Romaine Salad w/ Dressing Fresh Orange Milk
11 French Toast Sticks w/ French Toast Syrup, Veggie Sandwiches, Sun Butter and Strawberry Jelly w/ Unsweetened Cold Corn Cup Milk	12 Applesauce, Cinnamon Popcorn Milk	13 Chicken Meatballs with Tomato Sauce with Grated Cheese Turkey & Cheese on W/G Bread Veggie Meatballs with Tomato Sauce, Oriental Mixed Vegetables Fresh Baby Carrots w/ Dip Milk	14 Sun Butter and Strawberry Jelly w/ Unsweetened Cold Corn Cup Sliced Chicken and Cheese on W/G Potato Bun Potato Salad Cup Fresh Pear Milk	15 Domino's Pizza Slice Romaine Salad w/ Dressing Fresh Orange Milk
18 W/G Chicken and Cheese Quesadilla, Black Bean and Corn Cup Mini Cheese Quesadilla with Mini Pretzels and Strawberry Yogurt Hummus Cup with Mini Pretzels and Strawberry Yogurt Mixed Fruit Cup Milk	19 W/G Grilled Cheese Sandwich Fresh Baby Carrots w/ Dip Turkey and Cheese on a W/G Bread, Potato Salad Cup Diced Pear Cup Milk	20 Beef Meatloaf w/ ketchup, Marshmallows and whole Grain Bread Bean and Cheese Burrito w/ Marshmallows Beef Bologna & Cheese on Whole Grain Bread Fresh Orange Milk	21 Grilled BBQ Chicken Rillet on w/g Bun with Mixed Vegetables Veggie Chicken Curry on Wheat Bun Turkey Meat and Sauce Cheese on W/G Potato Bun Applesauce Cup Milk	22  NO SCHOOL!
25  NO SCHOOL!	26  NO SCHOOL!	27  NO SCHOOL!	28  NO SCHOOL!	29  NO SCHOOL!

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Spotlight on Safety from Ms Brower!

Spotlight on Safety: The Effects of Bullying

Each month, this column will feature information, articles, and links to resources to increase understanding of New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (ABBR) statute and support practices that promote a safe and positive school climate at Pride. It is our goal to ensure all school staff, administrators, volunteers and contracted service providers develop the expertise required to recognize, prevent and respond appropriately to incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Bullying can result in serious psychological and behavioral effects such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, suicide, violence, and criminal behavior. It may also manifest in the form of vague physical ailments such as headaches, dizziness, and stomach aches, or impaired academic performance (Olweus, 1994). Feeling safe in school powerfully promotes student learning and healthy development (Devine and Cohen, 2007). Bullying, which is a serious impediment to school safety, negatively affects the climate of a school, disrupts the learning environment and diminishes student achievement among students who are bullied and among students who engage in bullying. Student absenteeism increases when bullying is a concern. In a national survey, 30% of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) students reported missing at least one day of school in the past month compared to 8.0% for the general student population (GLSEN, 2009).

- ❖ Students who witness bullying can become fearful and develop the belief that the adults are not in control or are uncaring. It is essential that you respond immediately if you suspect bullying or if you become aware of a situation that involves repeated conflict or may escalate into a physical altercation or bullying.
- ❖ Our teachers pay close attention to the language and social dynamics in our classrooms. They model our core values and talk about them daily with our students. They take advantage of "teachable moments" such as the beginning of group activities, during class meetings, and before playing games or changing seats to remind students of the importance of treating everyone with respect and making every member of the Pride family feel welcome.
- ❖ The greatest distinction between conflict and bullying lies in the balance of power involved. Conflict is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight. There is no significant imbalance of power, merely two or more individuals who are not getting along and who may, unfortunately, allow that disagreement to escalate to a physical level. Conflict is a normal part of human development. Our role is to help our children manage conflict in a manner that is peaceful, safe and respectful to all involved. Fighting is never permitted.
- ❖ Bullying is one-sided, where one or more students are victims of one or more person's aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victim(s). Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people. Bullying behaviors may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- 1. Verbal:** Includes taunting, name calling, inappropriate sexual behavior or comments, embarrassing someone in public, malicious teasing or making threats;
- 2. Psychological:** Includes spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people from activities, breaking up friendships.
- 3. Physical:** Includes hitting, punching, shoving, spitting, tripping, making rude or threatening gestures or taking personal belongings



Questions and Suggestions?

Your thoughts, questions and feedback are important to us. Please reach out to Mrs Thomas via email at fthomas@prideacs.org or call at 973-672-3200 ext. 201 if you would like to set up a time to meet or share about your experience at Pride so far this year.