

Hello!

Thanks so much for your interest in learning more about the new Palouse Roots classes this spring! The current Tuesday & Wednesday classes are going so well that we decided it was time to expand our offerings. Here, I've outlined some basic program information & important changes, new Covid precautions in particular. The attached Parent Handbook describes our school's background, philosophy, daily rhythm, & provides more detailed information not included below.

Palouse Roots has school at PCEI's Nature Center at 1040 Rodeo Drive in Moscow. The new spring classes will be on Thursdays & Fridays from 8:30am - 12:30pm beginning on January 7 & ending on June 11, 2021. There will be two teachers, lead teacher Misha Cleveland & assistant teacher Morgan Stevenson, leading a group of 10 children ages 4 - 7 years old. Morgan's bio is attached & you are welcome to schedule a time to meet her, as well as Misha if you have not met her yet. You are also encouraged to visit the Nature Center with your child to explore the different areas we use most often. We understand that it can take a little while to get comfortable in a new environment - We would be happy to find a time to introduce your child both to the space & the teachers!

We calculate tuition each month based on the number of weeks we have class that month. The weekly rate is \$80, so a typical month with four weeks would be \$320. We ask that you commit for the semester & give one month's notice if you need to withdraw. There is limited tuition assistance available, dependent upon the needs within the group - The Tuition Assistance document is attached.

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing."

We want your child to thrive at Palouse Roots! Appropriate clothing is critical for their comfort & success at outdoor school, & all clothing is not created equal. The attached Parent Handbook includes a list of required gear, including suggested & approved options & brands. If you have different clothing options you'd like to substitute, please ask Misha to preapprove them-Questions are encouraged! If you need financial support for apparel, please reach out to us & we will do all we can to help get your child the appropriate gear. Approved clothing is a requirement for attendance every day. Unless we have previously communicated with you about it, your child will not be able to stay for school on any day that they arrive in unsuitable clothing.

A big & exciting change is that our home base will now be in the Artist Studio at the top of the hill near the merry-go-round instead of in the yurt. Although the yurt is being converted into a gazebo at the pond area, we will definitely continue visiting & exploring that space. Student drop off will be near the parking lot entrance & the pick up location will be at the ever-appealing merry-go-round, at the playground behind the new greenhouse.

And now, the biggest change: we have multiple new precautions in place to reduce the risk of Covid transmission at Palouse Roots, including the use of masks.

We recognize that science demonstrates a significantly lower risk of infection from Covid outside. However, once we considered that information in the context of 4-7 year olds' social behaviors, we realized that in this case a significant risk still exists. We want students to be free to play & work together closely, without needing to distance them. We feel that the only way we can keep everyone both close & safe is to have clear expectations about mask wearing.

We are requiring teachers, students, & parents to wear masks during school, whenever within 6' of each other, both inside & outside. Teachers will gently, clearly, & consistently communicate this expectation to students. Facial expressions are meaningful & we appreciate their importance! Possibilities for non-masked times include spaced mask breaks & play zones as needed, as well as during snack time. There are lanyards attached to students' masks to make mask breaks easier.

We have researched & made masks specifically designed for children & will do everything we can to find the best fit for your child. You are also welcome to provide your own masks for your child, given that they meet minimum requirements. We will provide two masks for each student, based on their size & preferences. Each child's masks will be exclusively used by them & labeled for easy identification. One of the two masks will be kept at school & washed daily. The second can be worn home, but should also be washed after each school day & be worn/brought back to school. The Mask & Distancing Questionnaire is attached: Your answers will help us create a positive & safe environment where friendships & learning can flourish!

We ask that parents submit a form each day before drop off that includes a Covid symptom checklist & an exact temperature reading for each child. We are following Moscow School District's Covid precautions from their online handbook (MSD Covid Plan Link) and will utilize the details within to guide our decisions about anything related to sickness and return to school after sickness.

In addition to mask wearing, distancing, & daily symptom checks, we also have:

1. Separate, non-shared school supplies for each child (toolbox with tools, personal cubby with art supplies & sanitizer) to reduce the possibility of transmission via shared objects.
2. Sanitizing spray wherever there is a shared space or object for quick & easy cleaning.
3. Squirt bottles of sanitizer @ multiple spots where there is group play. I will especially encourage children to sanitize before taking masks off, after using a shared object, after using the restroom, & before eating.
4. Very little inside time. Students are only inside when moving their gear in & out of the Artist Studio or getting/putting away art supplies. Masks are always required in the Artist Studio, and a maximum of three students can be in there at a time. We also spray sanitize the indoor bathrooms after each use.

We have a diversity of perspectives & behaviors regarding mask wearing & precautions in our group. If your family would like me to help your child either take more or less of the specific precautions that only affect them individually, I am happy to guide them in that direction. Please talk to me individually about what this could look like for your child. It might mean keeping them further from others while masked, or sanitizing more often. Or, it could be encouraging your child to step away for more mask breaks, or to remember to take off their mask to feel the air & sun on their faces when they are a safe distance from others.

There are a lot of changes, especially all the Covid-related precautions, & we definitely recognize that the situation is not ideal... Still, the bottom line is that we WANT to keep school open for your children-and this is what we need to do to make that happen. We will adapt as we go & will keep decisions as neutral & science-informed as possible. Please ask lots of questions & know that we will do everything we can to make this work for you & your family!

Warmly,

Misha Cleveland
Lead Teacher/Director
Palouse Roots-PCEI's Nature School