



Saint James Elementary School

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August 2012

Dear Fellow St. James Families,

For years, our Partners for Excellence (PFE) program has worked beautifully to ensure our children's needs were covered in school. We as a community were able to assist and support our teaching staff and our school administration, and we all had opportunities to contribute to the success of the St. James family. The original designers of the PFE program did a fantastic job when the system was created for our school.

But as life shows us over and over again, we have grown and changed, and it's time for our PFE system to do the same. We are all still Partners here for Excellence, and with the guidance of Mr. Cardone and Mrs. Giordano, we hope we have evolved our program to fit the needs of our current school structure.

It is impossible to overstate the value of the services that so many family members provide to our school as volunteers. The contribution of time and talent not only help keep the school's costs down, but also enrich and enhance the school experiences of all our children.

The Partners for Excellence (PFE) program was originally developed to offer families flexibility in fulfilling their volunteer requirements by making opportunities available to both non-working and working parents. Our goal in restructuring the program is to continue to offer flexibility and ease to all.

We hope everyone will take a moment to review the following details and changes. After reviewing, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or clarifications. Our full contact information can be found at the end of this letter.

1 Hour Volunteer Time = 1 Point
Each St. James Family is Required to Earn 25 Points Each School Year
(or Pay the \$475 Fee)

At first glance, the increase from 16 to 25 points may seem scary. The fact is, the old system of earning 1 point for each 1½ hours would require 24 hours of volunteer service. Furthermore, many commitments actually required 35-40 hours of service to earn the same 16 points. The new 25 hours = 25 points creates a fair earning system across the board.

Can't Volunteer? No Problem.

As we have done in the past, we fully understand for some families, volunteering just isn't an option, and they prefer to pay the fee. Know that this is just as important to our PTA as having volunteers, and we thank you.

For the 2012-2013 School Year, the fee will remain the same at \$475. *For the 2013-2014 School Year, the fee will increase to \$500, but the due date will move to August 1st.*

We are also removing the penalty fee for those who do not pay by the due date, but in order for the PTA to fund our many programs, your prompt payment is appreciated. Payment is due no later than Tuesday, September 7, 2012.

**“I only earned 21 points, do I really need to pay \$475?”
The Quick Answer is NO!**

We appreciate everyone’s hours of service, but life happens, and sometimes getting to the full 25 points by the end of the school year is impossible. We understand, and we don’t want to penalize those who make every effort to earn their points.

Effective July 1, 2012, every family is expected to earn 25 points or pay the fee of \$475 for the 2012-2013 school year. For those families who earn a minimum of 20 points, we will pro-rate the fee due at the end of the school year. For each unearned point over and above 20, families will be billed \$19 per point.

\$475 divided by 25 Points = \$19 per point
(2013-2014 School Year, Points will increase to \$20 per Point)

For example, the Jones family earns 19 points by mid-May. We will reach out to let them know of opportunities available to assist them in reaching 25 points. But if their schedule only permits them to earn two additional points for a total of 21 points, they will be billed \$76 (4 points x \$19).

IMPORTANT – In order to have points pro-rated, families must earn a minimum of 20 points. Anything under 20 points will be billed at the full rate. We will do everything we can to assist families who are making every effort to earn their points to ensure we can get them to 25 points.

**“I signed-up for a few different committees in January.
Do I need to sign-up again?”**

We have all the original PFE contracts submitted during re-registration, and we have been organizing and reaching out to existing Committee Chairs this summer. And we will continue to reach out through the school year to those who signed-up on the original PFE forms. However, we do ask that all families please visit the St. James website to re-commit with their intent, sign-up for new commitments or state they will pay their fee in lieu of service hours. We also have new opportunities available this year.

Beginning early August, a new system will be in place on the St. James website to make registering and completing PFE commitments much easier. An E-Mail Blast will be sent as soon as the system is live, and it will include complete details on the new system and instructions on completing the paperwork.

We thank everyone for taking the time to review the updated PFE program. We are here to answer questions or help navigate. We truly hope these improvements will provide our families the ability to become involved at their desired level within St. James Elementary School.

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