


The Pennfield

School

*Work Hard
Be Kind
Have Fun!*

STUDENT
HANDBOOK

2024–2025

A Message to Our Community

It is important that every person in our school community understands the values, common practices, and expectations that make our school a safe and fun place to learn. We must keep these guidelines in mind each and every day we are at school. This handbook is for you, as a Pennfield student, and your parents/guardians to keep as a reference guide. If there are parts of it that you do not fully understand, please have a conversation with your parent/guardian or ask your teacher or Advisor to explain it to you.

The most important value we follow here at Pennfield is that *every person in our school community has the right to be treated with kindness and respect*. The following goals and expectations are related to that guiding principle.

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The Pennfield School

Telephone: 401-849-4646 | Fax: 401-847-6720

www.pennfield.org

Administrator & Coordinator Contact Information

Paul Amadio , ext. 201

Head of School

pamadio@pennfield.org

Paul's cell: 401-443-0111

Mathew Bottone, ext. 204

Coordinator of Student Life

[mbottone@pennfield.org](mailto:m bottone@pennfield.org)

Mattie Edwards Kemp, ext. 205

Director of Diversity, Equity,

Inclusion & Belonging

[mkemp@pennfield.org](mailto:m Kemp@pennfield.org)

Kristin Emory, ext. 147

***Senior Director of Enrollment
and Advancement***

kemory@pennfield.org

Veronica Hardy, ext. 122

Director of Center for Student Success

vhardy@pennfield.org

Eddie Jewel, ext. 151

Athletic Director

ejewel@pennfield.org

Karen Lambert, ext. 121

Assistant Head of School

for Students and Faculty

klambert@pennfield.org

Marianne Lawless, ext. 206

Assistant Head of School for

Curriculum and Instruction

mlawless@pennfield.org

Abby Rowe, ext. 103

Office Manager and Administrative

Assistant to the Head of School

arowe@pennfield.org

Allison Serina, ext. 106

***Senior Director of Operations
and Finance***

aserina@pennfield.org

Frank Tito, ext. 207

Director of Technology

ftito@pennfield.org

Mission of The Pennfield School

Pennfield's mission is to create an inclusive community of dedicated learners, where students are given a foundation and appreciation for the joyful pursuit of understanding—and respect for themselves and others as a way of life.

Our Core Values

At Pennfield, we are committed to:

- Creating an environment in which everyone is treated with kindness and respect.
- Being a joyful place, where students learn by example: the importance of honesty, integrity, generosity, and humor.
- Providing a challenging and balanced curriculum, preparing our students to succeed in secondary school and beyond.
- Creating an all-inclusive culture that is diverse in make-up, is accepting of others, and helps develop a strong sense of social and community responsibility.
- Embracing the uniqueness of every member of our community and providing the individual attention needed to help each student's talents unfold.
- Providing a safe and supportive environment in which students are encouraged to take academic, artistic, and athletic risks.

The Pennfield School Song

*We the children of Pennfield School
Ever thank thee for the memories of our youth.
We are striving for new knowledge
As we're growing and maturing through the years.
Let our voices loudly praise thee,
Ever thankful for the spirit you possess.
As we grow unfold our special talents
To prepare our hearts and minds for future years.*

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
SAFE SCHOOL ACT
STATEWIDE BULLYING POLICY
200-RICR-30-10

This Statewide Bullying Policy is promulgated pursuant to the authority set forth in §16-21-34 of the General Laws of Rhode Island. Known as the Safe School Act, the statute recognizes that the bullying of a student creates a climate of fear and disrespect that can seriously impair the student's health and negatively affect learning. Bullying undermines the safe learning environment that students need to achieve their full potential. The purpose of the Policy is to ensure a consistent and unified statewide approach to the prohibition of bullying at school.

State Definitions:

BULLYING means the use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student that:

- a. Causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
- b. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- c. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment for the student;
- d. Infringes on the rights of the student to participate in school activities; or
- e. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

The expression, physical act or gesture may include, but is not limited to, an incident or incidents that may be reasonably perceived as being motivated by characteristics such as:

Race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or mental, physical, or sensory disability, intellectual ability or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

Bullying most often occurs as repeated behavior and often is not a single incident between the bullying/cyber-bullying offender(s) and the bullying victim(s).

CYBER-BULLYING means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication.

Any form of bullying that occurs, while in or outside of school, on the weekend or over vacation, that is hurtful or mean-spirited toward any member of the Pennfield community or any other student will be viewed as a serious disciplinary infraction.

All Pennfield faculty, students, and parents/guardians are expected to promptly report any knowledge of such activity to the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

For more information, visit SafeSupportiveLearning.ed.gov for Rhode Island School Discipline Laws & Regulations: Bullying, Harassment, or Hazing.

Daily Schedule

Lower School Daily Schedule

8:00	First Bell
8:00 – 8:05	Homeroom (attendance)
8:10 – 8:25	Assembly
8:30 – 9:15	Period 1
9:15 – 9:55	Period 2
9:55 – 10:10	Recess
10:10 – 10:50	Period 3
10:50 – 11:30	Period 4
11:30 – 12:10	Period 5
12:10 – 12:30	Lunch: K - 2 / Recess: 3 - 5
12:30 – 12:50	Lunch: 3 - 5 / Recess: K - 2
12:50 – 1:30	Period 7
1:30 – 2:10	Period 8
2:10 – 2:50	Period 9
2:55	Kindergarten - Grade 2 Dismissal
3:00	Grades 3 - 5 - Dismissal

Upper School Daily Schedule

8:00	First Bell
8:00 – 8:05	Homeroom (attendance)
8:10 – 8:25	Assembly
8:30 – 9:15	Period 1
9:15 – 9:55	Period 2
9:55 – 10:10	Recess (Wednesday advisory)
10:10 – 10:50	Period 3
10:50 – 11:30	Period 4
11:30 – 12:10	Period 5
12:10 – 12:50	Period 6
12:50 – 1:10	Lunch
1:10 – 1:30	Recess
1:30 – 2:10	Period 8
2:10 – 2:50	Period 9
2:50 – 3:00	Independent Work
3:00	Athletics Dismissal
3:05	Upper School Dismissal

General Information

Absence from School

If you are unable to come to school, your parent/guardian should call the school before 8:10 a.m., when daily attendance is submitted.

You may need to be absent from school for an extended period of time for reasons not related to illness although special absence requests not related to illness or family emergency are strongly discouraged. In such instances, your parent/guardian should notify the Division Head and the front desk about such absences as far in advance as possible. In cases of extended absences, for any reason, students should make arrangements to complete assignments in advance. Notifying teachers at least one week in advance is necessary so they can prepare work for you. You are ultimately responsible for making up any missed assignments within a specific time period after your return.

In the Primary School and Lower School, parents/guardians must also notify their child's homeroom teacher. In the Upper School, students are responsible for notifying all of their classroom teachers and Advisor.

In all cases, students are responsible for collecting assignments in a timely manner and are responsible for completing all missed work during such absences. If you were absent due to illness, once you are back in school you will have a one-day grace period for every day of school you were absent in which to turn in the assignments you missed.

Checking your paper planner or web-based resource (ie, Google Classroom), or emailing a teacher or a friend, are excellent ways to get additional information regarding any missed assignments. Any extra tutoring that may be needed to make up for lost class time during such an absence will be at your family's expense.

You may not leave school during the day, unless you have permission from your parent/guardian. If you have a special appointment during the day your parent/guardian must notify the front desk and homeroom teacher in advance, whenever possible. Otherwise, please bring a note from your parent/guardian and give it to the front desk.

Cancellation of School

In the event that school must be canceled because of snow or unusual weather conditions, decisions about delays or cancellations will be made by 6:00 a.m. and published shortly thereafter. Notices will be emailed to parents/guardians and posted on local media networks. If the Portsmouth Public Schools department issues a cancellation, Pennfield will also cancel school.

To sign up for text alerts from RI Broadcasters, please visit the RI Broadcaster School Cancellation Network at RIBroadcasters.com.

In the event that weather conditions make transportation hazardous during the school day, your parent/guardian may choose to pick you up early. Please check out at the front desk before departing.

Arrival and Departure

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. each morning when the John and Nancy Pedrick Academic Wing opens. You should report to your homeroom at that time, ready to start the day. Students who need to be dropped off between 7:30 and 7:55 a.m. should report to the lunchroom. All students and parents/guardians arriving at school shortly before 8:00 a.m. must also wait inside the lunchroom.

When dropping off or picking up your students at the front of the school, please do not park and

get out of your vehicle, this area is for drop-offs/pick-ups only and needs to be kept clear for buses. If you would like to walk your student into the building, please park in the lot. Unless meeting with a teacher for a scheduled tutoring session or other prearranged reason, students may not enter the academic wing or go to their classrooms or lockers before the 8:00 a.m. bell.

We will meet for morning assembly in the gymnasium each day at 8:10 a.m. Assembly is a time for singing, announcements, presentations, and the sharing of information.

Dismissal from school occurs as follows:

- 1:00 p.m. – Preschool and pre-kindergarten (unless participating in Extended Day Program)
- 2:45 p.m. – Preschool and pre-kindergarten (unless participating in Extended Day Program until 5:00 p.m.)
- 2:55 p.m. – Kindergarten – grade 2
- 3:00 p.m. – Grades 3 – 5
- 3:05 p.m. – Grades 6 – 8

Extended Day Program

Primary School – 1:00–3:00 p.m.

The Extended Day program provides care and supervision for our Primary School students every day from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Activities include rest time, arts and crafts, stories, free play, and outdoor play. There is no charge for this service.

All Grades – 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Extended Day supervision is available to all Pennfield students (Primary, Lower, and Upper) from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Extended Day is included in the tuition for students in grades 4–8; additional rates apply for students in preschool – grade 3.

Afternoon Check-Out

It is very important that you get to your transportation home quickly and safely at the close of school. Please proceed to the front entrance of the school promptly after your dismissal bell. Primary School and Lower School students should be accompanied by their teachers.

Please remain outside the school in the bricked area under the awning, or on the sidewalk and benches in front of the school until you are called to get into your car.

If someone other than your parent/guardian will pick you up, or if you are planning to go home with another student, please ask your parent/guardian to notify the school by emailing the front desk.

Use of the School Telephone

Telephones located in classrooms are for faculty use only. The front desk telephone is available to students for emergency use. For safety reasons, it is essential that the school is aware of any student phone calls to parents/guardians. If you need to use the phone to contact your parent/guardian, you must ask a faculty member for permission to go to the front desk.

Forgotten Items

If you forget to bring to school any items you need for the day such as your lunch, homework, books, sports equipment, etc., your parent/guardian may drop them off for you at the front desk.

Recess

Recess is a time for us to play together and to take a break from our academic studies. Please go outside to recess only after the teacher on duty has dismissed you. At the end of recess, please line up by grade quickly, quietly, and

safely and wait for the teacher on duty to send you back to your classroom.

For your safety, hard balls may not be used during recess. Always use the swings and other playground equipment in a safe and appropriate manner. Any activities that involve throwing a ball at another person (including snow balls) are prohibited.

The “hands-off” rule is extremely important to follow during recess. In addition, please be sure to allow all students to participate in games and activities during recess. Please do not say to anyone, “you can’t play.”

Lunch Time

Preschool and pre-kindergarten students eat lunch in their classrooms from 12:00–12:30 p.m. Students in Lower School and Upper School eat lunch in the lunchroom during one of three separate lunch periods:

- 12:10–12:30 p.m. Kindergarten–Grade 2
- 12:30–12:50 p.m. Grades 3–5
- 12:50–1:10 p.m. Grades 6–8

Please sit at a lunch table when you eat and remain seated until you are dismissed by a lunchroom duty teacher. The lunchroom should be a neat, quiet place to eat lunch. You will be asked to clean your table, bench, and the floor around you after you have finished eating. When your area is clean, please sit and wait quietly until you are dismissed.

Each day, two Upper School students are responsible for cleaning the lunchroom floor, under the supervision of the faculty member on duty.

Peanut/Tree Nut Policy

Students in preschool and pre-kindergarten will be notified by the school if there is a child in the class who has a peanut and/or tree nut allergy.

No student names will be shared without permission from parents/guardians. If there is a nut allergy within the class, no food containing those ingredients will be allowed into those classrooms. For kindergarten through 3rd grade, if there is a child with a nut allergy, the students in that class will not be allowed to bring food containing nuts in to eat for snack time, since snack is eaten in the classroom at this age level.

Students in kindergarten through 8th grade may bring peanuts and tree nuts into the lunchroom. For those with nut allergies and for their friends, a nut free table is located in the lunchroom. This table is closely monitored by faculty.

Products with peanuts and tree nuts are not allowed at any school events. This includes, but may not be limited to, Lower School and Upper School Extended Day, field trips, and bus rides to and from sporting events; nor will these products be sold during the Valentine’s Day bake sale or distributed at Trunk or Treat, class parties, PSA Friday breakfasts, Upper School dances, or other school events.

The safety and well-being of students and faculty are our first priority.

Recycling and Composting Program

The Pennfield community is constantly working to become much more conscious of limiting the amount of waste we produce. Much of the class materials you use are recyclable and care should be exercised to dispose of all recyclables appropriately. Each room in the school has bins for paper, plastic, metal, glass, as well as regular waste.

Recyclables from your lunch should be emptied and rinsed, if necessary, before placing them into the correct bin in the lunchroom. Compost buckets are available in the lunchroom for all compostable materials from your lunch, such as apple cores, banana peels, vegetable scraps, meat, and compostable silverware and plates.

Please feel free to take advantage of the blue plastic drop-off bin that caters to stretchable plastic bags and loose plastics like those that cover toilet paper rolls or zip-lock bags.

Academic Information

We want you to take advantage of the many different learning experiences at Pennfield. We encourage you to try new things and take some risks in the safe, supportive environment we provide. Use this time to challenge yourself, demonstrate your strengths, and improve your skills and understanding. We understand that we all have different learning styles and we may learn best in different situations—and it is our goal to provide such situations for everyone. Your teachers maintain high standards and expect you to work hard. We want you to leave Pennfield with self-confidence and the ability to solve any problems you may encounter in life.

Every Pennfield student is expected to do their best. When you have questions about your work, or when you do not understand, ask your teacher for help—they are always available when you need them.

Academic Reports and Parent/Teacher Conferences

From time to time during the school year, your parents/guardians and teachers will meet to talk about your progress. The first scheduled meeting is Parent/Teacher Conference Day, which occurs in October, and there will be no classes for students that day while parents meet with teachers and Advisors. This meeting coincides with the fall interim report, which details your progress during the first half of the fall term. You will also receive full academic reports, including individual teacher assessments and comments at the end of each term that explain how you are doing. Questions about academic progress may be addressed at the end of each term, or sooner

if the need arises. In addition to comments, students in grades 4 – 8 receive letter grades. If you or your parent/guardian has any academic concerns during the term, please call or email your classroom teacher or the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

Several times a year, grades and comments are distributed by teachers reporting on student's academic progress. Individual meetings with Advisors occur at these times to discuss recent academic achievement. These conversations are important because they help students take personal responsibility for progress and, if necessary, develop a plan to address any problems or challenges.

Advisors are there to help students learn personal responsibility. You may discuss any issues confidentially with your Advisor. However, issues involving your safety or the safety of others may not be held in confidence.

Homework Policy

Beginning in the 1st grade, your teachers may sometimes assign homework. The purpose of homework is to help you further your understanding of the material that you learned in the classroom. In addition, homework helps you to develop organizational skills, study skills, and the ability to follow directions. Students work on assignments at different speeds, but the following guidelines generally apply for homework:

Nightly Homework and Additional Reading Expectations

GRADE	HOMEWORK MINUTES	READING MINUTES (MINIMUM)	NIGHTS PER WEEK
1	15	15	4
2	30	20	4
3	45	25	5
4–8	30-60*	30	5

** If your student is spending an hour or more on any one subject, please stop and reach out to the teacher/have your student speak with the teacher at school the following day.*

This list should be used as a guideline. If you find that you are spending considerably more or less than the allotted time on homework, you should speak with your teacher or Advisor.

Artificial Intelligence

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) advances in our world, we understand the importance of maintaining a balance between AI integration and traditional teaching methods in our daily instruction. As educators, we remain at the forefront of every instructional decision, ensuring that AI is used responsibly as a tool to enhance our students' learning experiences. AI may only be used as directed by classroom teachers for the completion of homework assignments.

Library

The school library, in addition to serving as a classroom space for Primary School and Lower School library classes, is available for use by all students and teachers. You are encouraged to learn about how to use the materials in the library allowed, and with permission, to check out books and conduct research. Circulating materials must always be checked out before being removed from the library.

Center for Student Success

Pennfield's Center for Student Success (CSS) is dedicated to serving the unique needs of our neurodiverse population of students. Our students with learning differences may need additional resource support so we can meet them exactly where they are in their learning. The CSS is here to help bring students up to grade level as well as to support students who excel academically and need to be presented with new educational challenges. Our team focuses on all those needs and creates learning plans so that every student in CSS is successful.

After-School Programs

Supervised after-school programs are open to all students. If you are going to participate in an after-school program you should report directly to that activity. Certain sports, clubs, and other extracurricular activities are also open to kindergarten through 8th grade students. When your activity ends, please wait inside the atrium or out in front of the school with the supervising teacher until your ride arrives.

Social Expectations and Conduct

Safety in School

We need to be sure that you are safe at all times when you are at school. For that reason, an adult must be present when you are in the gymnasium, locker room, library, computer lab, lunchroom, or any other space in school buildings or on the campus. As a matter of kindness and safety, please hold doors for adults and smaller children. Jabbing, poking, and pushing can be hurtful to others. You must follow the "hands-off" rule, which means you keep your hands to yourself, at all times and especially in hallways and classrooms. To ensure orderly flow in our school hallways and stairways, please walk on the right side. Please also help keep hallways and other areas in the school clear and free of garbage, books, bookbags, and clothing. Remember to always walk—not run—in school.

Respectful Language

We expect that students will always use appropriate and kind language, which will not offend or hurt someone else's feelings. Teasing, bullying, and harassment is not tolerated.

Dealing with Conflict and Solving Problems

We must treat others just as we would like to be treated ourselves. When problems arise, we must solve them without violence or disrespect toward others. The best way to solve a problem with another student is to talk about it with the student and an adult. It is very important that we find solutions to problems through good communication and not by hurting others with unkind words or actions.

Dress Code

Pennfield's dress code is designed to help students be better prepared for school, because we believe that students' appearance influences their learning. School should be fun, interactive, and engaging, but within that context, it is also a serious endeavor. We expect that our students and their parents/guardians will honor the spirit as well as the letter of the dress code. Students must arrive and remain in dress code from 8:00 a.m. until dismissal.

Questions concerning the dress code should be directed to the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

All Pennfield students should wear practical and neat clothing. Clothes should be appropriately warm in the winter months. Proper coats should be worn outside for recess during cold weather.

Students should be dressed modestly and appropriately for school; midribs and undergarments may not be exposed, and only the top two buttons of shirts may be unbuttoned. The school dress code is to be followed on field trips, unless students are otherwise notified.

Every Friday is a Pennfield Spirit Dress Down Day. School gear can be purchased on Friday mornings prior to the start of school and is sold by the PSA. If you'd like to purchase in advance, please email PSA@pennfield.org to arrange.

Additionally, students in grades 4 through 8 may wear the following items:

- Crew neck or collared shirts with finished hems
- Dresses
- Dress shirts or blouses
- Pants or capris
- Skirts, dresses, and shorts (must not exceed 4 inches above the knee)
- Fleeeces or sweaters (sweatshirts are allowed, but hoods may not be worn in the building)

All students must refrain from wearing the following items:

- T-shirts, tank-tops, mini-skirts, short shorts, strapless or spaghetti strap tops, clothing that is oversized, overly tight, or revealing
- Clothing that exposes midribs or undergarments
- Clothing displaying branded messages or images
- Jeans or denim clothing of any color (with or without rivets)
- Clothing that is ripped or torn
- Hats (inside the building)
- Athletic wear (including gym or sports shorts; Pennfield or team sportswear, sweats or T-shirts)
- Camouflage clothing, shoes with built-in wheels or flip flops

Special Occasions:

For concert presentations or on other special events "concert dress" is worn by all students. Dress code guidelines regarding tank tops, straps, dress/skirt length, and tucking in of clothing still apply. "Concert dress" is defined as: dresses, skirts/dress pants with collared blouses, dress pants with collared dress shirts, jackets and ties, and appropriate shoes.

Note: Some concerts or special events may have an alternate dress code. Students and parents/guardians will be notified well in advance of any changes.

Major School Rules

All students are expected to follow the Major School Rules. Violations of these rules may include the following:

- Repeated minor rule violations
- Blatant dishonesty, lying, cheating, or plagiarism
- Improper use of computers or other technology
- Stealing or damaging property
- Harassment, bullying, or violence
- Threats or inappropriate language
- Blatant disrespect to faculty or staff
- Use of tobacco, vaping products, illegal drugs, or alcohol

Kindness and Treatment of Others

Treating others with kindness and respect is the most important value and expectation of a Pennfield student. This is an important area in which students should strive to take a leading role. We expect that all students will treat others with consideration both in and out of the classroom. Students' treatment of each other must be respectful at all times whether or not an adult is present. Pennfield encourages students, faculty, and parents/guardians to accept, embrace, and welcome differences.

Teasing, putting down, or ridiculing another student or students is not acceptable behavior and will be considered a serious offense. These offenses constitute harassment and are punishable as such. Pennfield, as a school community, abhors and prohibits bullying, ethnic, racial, sexist, or gender orientation abuse, or any sort of cruelty, and regards such acts as Major School Rules violations.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious Major School Rules violations. The faculty would like to trust the word of every student at Pennfield and

assume that, when a student hands in work, the work has been completed by that student to the best of their ability. If a student claims to have done work that they did not do, this act constitutes cheating. It is also cheating to help another student to be deceptive. In some cases, working together with a classmate or classmates is acceptable and can encourage cooperative learning. Keep in mind, however, that if you claim to have done work that was actually done by a classmate, you could be accused of cheating.

Plagiarism is literary theft. It involves attempting to pass off the ideas or words of another person as your own. In some cases, you will inadvertently fail to use proper forms of citation. Honest mistakes happen. Learning how to give proper credit to sources is an important part of your education. This form of plagiarism will be dealt with as part of the curriculum. The intentional attempt to steal someone's writing is an unacceptable breach of our Major School Rules.

Lying

Being untruthful compromises trust within the community and cannot be tolerated. Even small issues of dishonesty, such as asking to go to one place and going to another, can earn you a reputation for dishonesty. We value honesty among students and expect that when asked a question, even in a difficult situation, you will tell the truth. Lying is considered a Major School Rules violation.

Stealing and Damage to Property

Willfully taking that which does not belong to you, or intentionally damaging what belongs to another person, undermines the trust we share in our community. Stealing and/or damaging property is considered a serious Major School Rules violation.

Harassment

Students feeling harassed should speak with the classroom teacher or Advisor, as well as a trusted adult in the community immediately. The Pennfield School's harassment policy continues the school's long-standing conviction that everyone must be treated with kindness and respect regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

Harassment is misconduct that uses behavior or words—spoken or written—nonverbal body language, or any deliberate actions to convey disrespect for the human dignity of another person; thereby creating a hostile and offensive school and working environment. Students, faculty, and staff are accountable for their personal behavior and for supporting the rights of others to be free from improper treatment by anyone. Harassment is a Major School Rules violation and will not be tolerated.

Use of Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol

The use or possession of tobacco products, vaping products, alcohol, and/or illegal or dangerous drugs is considered a serious offense and may result in suspension or expulsion.

Lower School Discipline

In the event of a Major School Rules violation, the following steps will be taken:

- Parents/guardians will be informed that the Lower School Disciplinary Committee will meet to discuss and thoroughly review the disciplinary matter.
- The Disciplinary Committee will consist of the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty, the Senior Director of Enrollment and External Affairs, and an additional Lower School faculty member.
- The Disciplinary Committee will make recommendations to the Head of School regarding appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions.
- The approved decision by the Head of School will be communicated to the student's parent/guardian.

Using Technology at Pennfield

School Computers, Laptops, and iPads

Pennfield provides one-to-one iPads for students in grades 1 through 4 to use while in school only. Students in grade 5 to grade 8 must use their school-issued laptop.

All students are expected to observe the following General Technology Acceptable Use Policy while using technology in school. In addition, students must abide by the school's separate Electronic Device Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement (see Appendix).

General Technology Acceptable Use Policy

The use of Pennfield's technological resources is an integral part of the students' academic experience. However, the right to use them is a

privilege that must be respected. While using technology, students must act in a responsible and appropriate manner, and each student must agree to abide by the following guidelines:

- Students must be considerate of others while using technology in classrooms, and abide by the same guidelines of conduct that are specified elsewhere in this handbook.
- Students may not enter any website that would be offensive to any other student or teacher.
- Students may not send emails, instant messages, use chat rooms, or solicit correspondence that would be offensive, harassing, or hurtful to others.
- Students may use online dictionaries only when given explicit permission by their teacher. They are not permitted to use online translation services.
- Students must protect themselves and each other by not issuing any home addresses, telephone numbers, or other personal information over the Internet.
- Students should refrain from using social media platforms (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X [formerly Twitter], TikTok, Snapchat, and others) during school hours, including passing periods. This applies to social media apps and websites on personal and school-issued devices, including cell phones, iPads and tablets, smart watches, laptops, computers, or any other electronic devices while on school grounds
- Students should not engage in gaming unless allowed on technology in school.
- Students must appropriately cite any information (photographs or text) that is downloaded off the Internet for academic purposes. Your teachers can provide you with the proper format for citing electronic sources.

Violations of this General Technology Acceptable Use Policy or any unauthorized use of computers, laptops, and iPads will be viewed as a serious disciplinary infraction.

Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Students may not carry or use cell phones or smart watches during the academic day, including Extended Day and in-house athletics. During these times, your devices must remain turned off and stored in your locker or book bag. The only exception is after your academic and athletic obligations are complete and you are in either the glass atrium or on the entry sidewalk in front of the school. For numerous safety reasons, if you need to contact your parent/guardian or carpool, you must ask the front desk permission to use the school telephone. Students are expected to abide by this policy at all times or risk their devices being confiscated.

Audio Music and Video Policy

During the academic school day, at teacher discretion, students may be permitted to listen to appropriate music only (no videos) through their headphones. This includes after-school programs such as Extended Day, athletics, theatre, clubs, and other activities. Occasionally, coaches and chaperones may permit personal audio/video devices only when traveling to distant away games or field trips.

Upper School Guidelines

A NOTE TO UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS

As 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Pennfield, this section of the handbook is specifically devoted to you, the students of the Upper School.

You are the leaders of the student body, which means you have earned a higher level of independence—and with it, more responsibility. With younger students looking up to you, it's important that you set a positive example for conduct for the rest of the student body. In addition, it is expected that you take on the added responsibility for communicating important school announcements and information to your parent/guardian.

It is our goal as Upper School teachers to equip you with skills for continuing academic success and social growth. There are many adults in the Pennfield community here to assist and guide you through any challenges you may encounter. Keep in mind, the most important of these adults is your Advisor who is here to help you set individual goals, be organized, get the information you need, and solve problems.

The Upper School portion of this handbook identifies additional academic requirements, extracurricular offerings, social expectations, and other issues that are specific to Upper School students. After you have re-read this entire handbook at the start of each new school year, we ask that you and your parent/guardian sign the separate 2024–2025 Student Handbook Upper School Personal Responsibility Agreement. Please return the completed agreement to your Advisor during the first week of school. This will serve as a contract between you and the school regarding your conduct anytime you are on school grounds or representing Pennfield in the community, such as on field trips or school athletic events.

In Upper School, students move from class to class in a departmentalized system. Your belongings are stored in lockers and a backpack room. Support systems will remain in place, but students are given an increasing amount of independence in preparation for secondary school.

Advisory

Each Upper School student has a faculty Advisor; each Advisor interacts closely with a small group of students throughout the school year. Advisors work with the students on personal expectations, study skills, organization, goal setting, as well as other important aspects of student life. Advisors assist their advisees in choosing and preparing appropriate assembly speech material. Advisors will also conduct timely discussions on issues that are important to the community. This weekly meeting allows Advisors to become much more familiar with their individual advisees. Whenever possible, a student will remain a part of the same Advisory group for all three years of Upper School.

Regular weekly Advisory meetings take place in lieu of the Wednesday snack/recess period from 9:55–10:10 a.m. Advisors work with students individually and as a group, and keep advisees informed if additional meeting times are necessary during the year.

Students with any concerns or problems – academic, extracurricular, or social – should speak with their Advisor. Advisors provide support, serve as a student's primary advocate, and help with any school-related problem. Consulting with the Advisor as soon as issues arise prevents them from growing into major problems. Advisors can accompany students when meeting with a teacher if they feel the need for additional support.

If a teacher feels a student is having difficulty in a particular course, the teacher speaks both to the student and the Advisor. Advisors then help to determine how best to remedy the situation.

If there are any disciplinary issues, Advisors always are involved in any discussion of the matter and the determination of consequences.

A student's Advisor will typically be the faculty member who speaks most frequently with parents/guardians. Both classroom teachers and Advisors will contact parents/guardians whenever

necessary to provide updates about student progress and successes, as well as, any struggles or areas where additional work may be needed. Parents/guardians should feel comfortable contacting their child's Advisor at any time during the academic day. Parents/guardians may also email or call Advisors at home, after school, if there is a pressing issue or concern that cannot wait until the next school day.

Several times a year, grades and comments are distributed from teachers reporting on student's academic progress. Individual meetings with Advisors occur at these times to discuss recent academic achievement. These conversations are important because they will help students take personal responsibility for progress and, if necessary, work out a strategy for addressing any problems.

Advisors are there to help students become more responsible for themselves. You may discuss any issues confidentially with your Advisor. However, issues involving your safety or the safety of others may not be held in confidence.

Pennfield Prep

All Upper School students are assigned to at least one special study hall period called Pennfield Prep, which meets each week. During this class time nearly every Upper School teacher is available to meet individually or with small groups of students for additional academic assistance. The purpose of this class, in addition to allowing time during school for homework completion, is to provide increased instruction, practice, and support to our students. Opportunities for augmented review and reinforcement in preparation for classroom assessments, in addition to special multi-class and cross-curricula projects are some exciting possibilities offered by the Pennfield Prep class time. 8th grade students will participate in Yearbook class during one of these periods throughout the fall and winter terms.

Independent Work Period

The independent work period takes place in your last period classroom. After period 9 ends at 2:50 p.m., students may read an independent book of their choice either in traditional or electronic format. This is also an opportunity for students to catch up on missing assignments and check in with teachers and Advisors. At 3:00 p.m., students must collect the necessary materials for the evening's assignments from their lockers, pack their backpacks and will be dismissed from school at 3:05 p.m.

Upper School Report Cards and Interim Reports

Report cards will be distributed to parents/guardians at the end of each term. They will include letter achievement grades, behavior and effort grades, and comments from each teacher. In addition, an interim report will be generated for a student who is earning a C- or below in any class. Interim reports, issued at the midpoint of each term, provide a brief summary of student progress in a particular class. During the winter and spring terms, only those students whose academic performance or behavior has dramatically changed since the previous term's grade report will receive an interim report. Advisors will meet with students at the time of interim reports and report cards, to evaluate progress and to help set goals and establish strategies, as needed. If students feel that they have received an inaccurate grade, or do not understand a comment made by a teacher, they are encouraged to speak to the teacher and the Advisor.

Academic Probation

A student who finishes the term with two or more grades of C- or below will be placed on Academic Probation. Students on Academic Probation will receive progress reports from their teachers every

week. Advisors will work closely with any student on Academic Probation, to create an action plan to address any specific areas of concern. Students who are on Academic Probation for two consecutive terms may not be invited back for the following academic year. If a student fails a course, an individualized program will be developed for the student in order to receive credit for the class.

Assembly Speeches

Each Upper School student will be required to present a speech during morning assembly. Assembly speeches represent a tremendous opportunity to develop confidence and skills in public speaking. They also provide each Upper School student an opportunity to share a topic that is of personal interest with the rest of the student body. Advisors will assist students in choosing topics, preparing, and organizing speeches. Speeches should be no longer than 2-3 minutes in length. Specific guidelines and assigned speech dates will be posted on the Upper School bulletin board. It is every student's responsibility to begin preparing for their speech well in advance, and making arrangements to rehearse with their Advisors. Students who require use of their laptop and the school digital projector for their speech must make prior arrangements with the Coordinator of Student Life. In addition, public speaking is practiced during class presentations in various subjects throughout the year.

Community Service

Numerous in-house community service opportunities occur throughout the year. This may involve volunteering for various activities and projects within, around and sometimes outside the school. Members of the Student Council are instrumental in spearheading and coordinating many of these events. Each year, Upper School Advisory groups create service projects to benefit our community.

During the summer preceding the 8th grade year, each 8th grade student completes a community service project, as a prerequisite for graduation. A minimum of twenty hours of work must be performed for an organization in the community. Students work with the Coordinator of Student Life to choose and complete an appropriate project. Assembly speeches may focus upon the students' volunteer experiences. In addition, each student is expected to write an essay for their English teacher reflecting upon their community service project.

Extracurricular Opportunities

Pennfield offers a number of extracurricular activities to Upper School students. Students are encouraged to try new things, not just those activities at which they excel. Achieving a comfortable balance is important. Upper School students participate in at least one season of an after-school activity.

Many activities, such as Student Council, spring theatrical production, sports, and club activities involve an after-school commitment.

Spring Theatrical Production

Every spring, 4th through 8th grade students present a theatrical production, which is performed for parents/guardians, students, faculty, and friends. Rehearsals for the production coincide after school with the spring athletic season, we strive to accommodate students who wish to participate in both a sport and the show.

Athletics

Upper School sports function in accordance with the general Upper School policy of encouraging students to try new things without fear of failure.

Every student who wishes to participate in sports may do so. Upper School students may participate during any or all of the three sports

seasons. The athletic seasons include basketball and track in the winter, and lacrosse and track in the spring.

Good sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity and self-confidence are the primary goals of the athletic program. You do not need prior experience in playing a sport in order to go out for the teams; coaches stress the fundamental skills of learning how to play, and properly prepare the students to confidently participate in games.

Practice schedules for after school for athletics will be distributed by coaches at the start of each season. A game schedule will be distributed to families and posted on the school website at the beginning of each season; most games will run past 4:30 p.m. During the winter season, boys and girls basketball practices are staggered, and will run later in the evening, with the second practices ending at 5:30 p.m. Up-to-date practice and game schedules may be found on the school website. Students or parents/guardians with questions pertaining to athletics should contact the Athletic Director for more information. Note: The required medical forms MUST BE ON RECORD in the school office in order for students to participate in sports or start classes.

Upper School Social Events

The Upper School faculty chaperone social events, such as dances, for Upper School students. The dates for these events will be provided at least two weeks in advance; the Student Council will help to decide when to hold these events and will plan for them. Attendance at these events is optional. If students decide to attend one of these events, they are responsible for arranging their own transportation and they must remain until they are picked up by a parent/guardian. Students' cell phones are not permitted at dances.

Respect for School Community

Kindness and consideration also extend from the treatment of others in the community to caring for and taking care of your school and its facilities. You need to take care of your belongings and be careful not to damage the belongings of others.

- Keep your possessions in your locker or in a designated place. Do not leave your belongings in classrooms, hallways, or bathrooms.
- Put your name on all of your belongings.
- Use another's belongings only with their permission.
- Students may not enter another person's locker or bags.
- Treat the school with respect by helping to keep the grounds clean.
- Clean up after yourself; trash, recyclables, and compost should be deposited in the appropriate receptacles.

Please review the Major School Rules section of this handbook.

Upper School Discipline

In the Upper School, we firmly believe that all students can learn from their mistakes. Our goal is to assist students in choosing behaviors that support kindness, understanding and respect, thus enhancing the learning environment for others.

Upper School years are a time of growth, both academic and social. As a community, we understand that as students grow, develop value systems, and test limits of authority, they sometimes make mistakes. It is our goal to help them learn from these mistakes, while teaching the importance of accountability, responsibility and consequences. We try to administer consistent consequences, when necessary, with firmness and compassion.

It is our ultimate goal to encourage students to take responsibility for their conduct and behavior. We employ a progressive system of consequences that the students are aware of and understand. In any incident we will consider, however, the needs and age of the individual student as well as the circumstances of the incident, and the student's previous record of conduct.

Dress Code Violations

Upper School students are expected to uphold the spirit and letter of the dress code. In those instances when a student arrives at school wearing inappropriate clothing, he or she will be required to change before attending classes and the student's parent/guardian will be called. Dress code infractions are considered a minor school rule violation, however, repeated infractions will warrant that the student also receive a Detention Slip.

If a change of appropriate clothing is not available, the student's parent/guardian must deliver alternate clothing to school before the student will be permitted to attend class. For this reason, students are encouraged to always keep a spare change of dress code clothing in their lockers.

When a student is deemed to be out of dress code, she or he will also meet with the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty and write a note to take home, which must be signed by the student's parent/guardian and returned the following morning. Failure to return this note will result in a Detention Slip.

Repeated violations of the dress code will result in additional consequences, as well a meeting between the student and student's parent/guardian, Advisor and the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

Any student receiving multiple Detention Slips for dress code violations during the course of a

single academic year may not participate in afternoon athletics or other extracurricular activities until further notice. A Green Slip for repeated minor rule violations may also be issued, and the Disciplinary Committee will be convened to address this issue.

For specific descriptions, please see the Dress Code section of this handbook.

Detention Slips

The vast majority of disciplinary matters are minor and are appropriately handled by faculty and staff on an individual basis. These are often great “teachable” moments for students. In most of these cases, no documentation is necessary - the issue is resolved and we move on. However, when a student’s Advisor and parent/guardian need to be informed of a minor rule infraction which warrants a disciplinary response, a teacher will issue a Detention Slip. Typically, this occurs when a student has not heeded our previous warnings, or if the nature of the infraction is more serious.

In those situations, students will be assigned a Morning Detention (as indicated in the lower portion of the Detention Slip) for an infraction. Detentions are primarily given for:

- Failure to follow Pennfield’s Standards of Conduct
- Disrespectful behavior to students, faculty or staff
- Repeated Dress Code violations

Detentions may be assigned, and the inappropriate behavior documented, by any faculty member. Additional consequences may also be indicated on the Detention Slip.

Generally, since Detentions are prearranged, there are no excuses for missing Detention. Detentions are served before school, from 7:30–8:00 a.m. Prompt arrival is expected. Any student arriving to a detention after 7:30 a.m. will incur an additional Detention.

Students must return their completed Detention Slips, signed by themselves and their parent/guardian, on the morning of the Detention. Failure to do so will result in another Detention.

Consequences of Multiple Detention Slip Infractions

2nd Detention Slip

If, during the course of a single academic year, a student receives two (2) Detention Slips, a parent/guardian meeting will be scheduled. The parent/guardian and student will be required to promptly meet with the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty and the student’s Advisor to formalize an action plan to ensure that the behavior and disciplinary issues are properly addressed.

3rd Detention Slip

Receiving a 3rd Detention Slip will necessitate another parent/guardian meeting with the student, the student’s Advisor, and the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty. The student may also be placed on behavioral probation by the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

4th Detention Slip

Any student receiving a 4th Detention Slip during the course of a single academic year may not participate in afternoon athletics or other extracurricular activities until further notice.

Additionally, receiving a 4th Detention Slip for minor rules violations during the course of the school year is considered a Major School Rules violation. The student’s repeated improper behavior requires a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee, and a Green Slip will be issued (see Green Slips section for details).

Green Slips

Although it is quite unlikely to occur, a student may break a Major School Rule. In those circumstances, a Green Slip will be issued.

When a student receives a Green Slip, the Upper School Disciplinary Committee will be convened to review all the details of this serious infraction, after which the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty will make a recommendation to the Head of School regarding an appropriate course of action.

Students in violation of a Major School Rule may be placed on behavioral probation, suspended, or dismissed from Pennfield. If a student commits a Major School Rules violation, parents/guardians will be notified immediately about this disciplinary process.

Disciplinary Committee

The Upper School Disciplinary Committee is convened by the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty, and consists of four faculty members including the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty and the Coordinator for Student Life. The student's Advisor will also be present during the Disciplinary Committee meeting to represent the student. The Disciplinary Committee's role is to review all pertinent information. The Disciplinary Committee discusses the matter, identifies the behavioral infraction(s), and makes appropriate disciplinary recommendations to the Head of School.

Behavioral Probation

Students who commit a Major School Rules violation may be placed on behavioral probation. The length of this probationary period will be determined by the Disciplinary Committee and the Head of School.

If a student commits another Major School Rules violation while on behavioral probation, the student will be subject to dismissal.

Standards of Conduct

The Upper School community is a close and caring group of students, families, advisors, and faculty. We value our relationships with each other and strive to develop an atmosphere of trust, respect for differences, support, and understanding. We expect that students will behave responsibly and with consideration for the feelings of other students, family members, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own behavior anywhere on or off campus.

It is essential that students conduct themselves in ways that are in keeping with the School's standards of good conduct. All members of The Pennfield School community have the right to be treated with kindness and respect. Furthermore, each member of the community should be afforded an environment in which he or she can feel safe, both physically and emotionally.

Upper School is a time when students should be accepting more responsibility for their behavior. Students are expected to uphold the qualities of honesty, in personal and academic matters, and kindness, or acting at all times with consideration for the feelings of others. We have few stated rules because we take your honesty and good judgment for granted. We expect that each member of the community will be helpful and supportive of other members of the community and show respect for others at all times.

While school is in session and students are on campus, at a school function held elsewhere, or on a school sponsored trip, we expect students to behave responsibly at all times.

We welcome the cooperation and support of parents in helping us to uphold these standards. If parents and the School work together to try and establish the appropriate balance of freedom and responsibility for Upper School students, we should have few discipline problems and will develop a strong sense of trust and community for both students and families.

APPENDIX

Electronic Device Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement

Students in 5th grades through 8th grade will sign a separate copy of this document during the first week of classes. Please retain a copy of this policy at home to reference.

We remain excited with the integration of one-to-one technology use in our learning environment. Students in grades 5 through 8 will receive a school-issued laptop with all necessary software for day-to-day school use. Students may not use other laptops or devices for school work, or download non-issued/approved third-party software on their laptops. In addition to Pennfield's General Technology Acceptable Use Policy, and to ensure a positive experience for everyone, we have developed the following collaborative laptop guidelines:

1. Responsible Use: We trust our students to use laptops appropriately and respectfully. Faculty members are here to guide and support proper usage. The school reserves the right to collect and inspect any student's laptop at any time, in order to monitor laptop usage for compliance and safety. This policy is designed to create a secure and productive digital learning environment, while teaching students responsible technology use skills that will benefit them beyond the classroom.

2. Focused Learning: To maintain a productive learning environment, we kindly ask students to:

- Use only the educational software approved by teachers
- Limit communication to school-related tasks via email only
- Download additional required software only with teacher or parent/guardian guidance

3. Laptop Care:

- Charge laptop nightly in a common family area
- Keep laptop in labeled, protective case
- Avoid eating or drinking while using laptop

4. Classroom Etiquette:

- Use laptops in class only when specifically instructed by teachers
- Respect each student's personal laptop, which is the property of the school and may not be used by others

5. Privacy and Safety (Major School Rules):

- Use microphone/camera and access audio/video content only with teacher permission
- Maintain appropriate content on laptop
- Students may not use technology to access or create inappropriate material

We encourage open communication. If you notice any concerns, please feel free to discuss them with a faculty member or parent/guardian.

Our school community will work together to determine appropriate software and content for learning purposes.

If guidelines aren't followed, we'll work with the student to address the issue and may temporarily hold the laptop to ensure a positive learning environment for all. We look forward to partnering with you in this exciting educational journey!

By signing, we acknowledge our commitment to these shared guidelines:

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

GRADE DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE



**2024–2025 Student Handbook
Upper School Personal Responsibility Agreement**

I have thoroughly read the Pennfield Student Handbook, paying close attention to the Upper School Guidelines, and have discussed its contents with my parent/guardian.

I understand what is expected of me in terms of academics, extracurricular activities, use of technology, and standards of conduct.

I have carefully reviewed the sections on Social Expectations for Conduct, and I understand that honesty, respect, and consideration for the feelings of others are the most important values of the Pennfield community.

I have read and understand the Dress Code section, and I will respect and abide by its guidelines and spirit.

I understand that during my years in the Upper School, I will be expected to take responsibility for my actions, act as a positive role model for younger students, and be the best citizen I can be.

STUDENT NAME (PRINTED)

GRADE

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

Note to students: Please sign this agreement only **after** you and your parent/guardian have finished reading and discussing the Student Handbook, and then return it to your Advisor by Friday, September 6, 2024.

Little Slocum Farm
110 Sandy Point Avenue
Portsmouth, RI 02871
401.849.4646
contact@pennfield.org
pennfield.org

JOY • UNDERSTANDING • RESPECT