



Work Hard
Be Kind
Have Fun!

STUDENT
HANDBOOK

2025–2026

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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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 <https://ride.ri.gov/students-families/health-safety/bullying-school-violence> for Rhode Island School Discipline Laws & Regulations: Bullying, Harassment, or Hazing.

Daily Schedule

Lower School Daily Schedule

7:55 – 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
2:45	Primary Department Dismissal
2:55	Kindergarten - Grade 2 Dismissal
3:00	Grades 3 - 5 - Dismissal

Middle School Daily Schedule

7:55 – 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	Middle School Dismissal

General Information

Lunchbox Express (LBE)

This is our most expedient method of disseminating information to parents – The Head of School’s letter to parents is sent via email to all families every Thursday during the school year. Parents are expected to review the LBE each week for news and updates, and calendar reminders.

Pennfield School Association

The Pennfield School Association is the Parent and Teacher organization of the School. The PSA provides a vital link between parents, teachers and the school administration. The PSA serves as a school spirit organization through community activities throughout the year. The PSA raises money through a variety of programs to support these activities and to fund items that directly benefit the school through support for our faculty, classrooms, technology, and other specific goals determined by the membership. Suggestions for new initiatives and events may be raised during monthly PSA meetings by any Pennfield parent or member of the faculty.

Each class, from Preschool through Class 8, has a parent representative who acts as a liaison for parents, especially those new to the school, and assists teachers as needed in a variety of matters such as coordinating parties or recruiting field trip chaperones. The class representative is expected to keep informed on school matters, and report back to their class parents.

PSA monthly meetings are open to all members of the Pennfield community. The meeting usually includes a report by the Head of School, program reports from various committees, any faculty requests, and planning for upcoming events. New business, ideas, and comments are always welcome.

The Executive Committee of the PSA is made up of:

President — The President is responsible for overseeing, along with the Executive Board, all activities throughout the school year. The president prepares the agenda and runs the monthly meetings. This is a two-year term.

Vice President—The Vice President is responsible for overseeing PSA activities and supporting the president. After a two-year term, the vice president will then become president for an additional term of two years, if they so choose.

Secretary — The Secretary is responsible for recording notes from meetings. The secretary will also participate in activities throughout the year. This is a one-year, extendable term.

Treasurer — The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the budget. This is a one-year, extendable term.

Faculty Representative — Each year a faculty member volunteers to sit on the Executive Committee. The faculty representative brings all teacher requests for enrichment and supplies to the PSA for review and approval.

Arrival and Departure

The school day begins at 7:55 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. Middle School students are responsible for checking in with their homeroom teacher prior to assembly to ensure proper attendance. 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 7:55 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, 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 7:55 a.m.

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. Parents and Special Friends are always welcome to attend.

Dismissal from school occurs as follows:

- 1:00 p.m. – Preschool and pre-kindergarten (unless participating in Primary 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 Middle) 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. Proceed to the front entrance of the school promptly after dismissal. Primary School and Lower School students should be accompanied by their teachers.

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, ask your parent/guardian to notify the school by emailing the front desk.

Absence from School

If you are unable to come to school, your parent/guardian should call or email the Front Desk 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 Assistant Head of School for Faculty and Students 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. 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, 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.

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.

Use of the School Telephone

Telephones located in classrooms are for faculty use only. The front desk and nurse's office telephones are 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 to ask for permission to use the phone.

Potty Training Policy

Potty trained children can do the following:

- Be able to tell the adult they have to go potty before they have to go.
- Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
- Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
- Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
- Be able to wash and dry hands.
- Be able to come back to the classroom without directions.
- Be able to wait for a small amount of time in case bathroom is already occupied or the child has to come in from outside.

Due to state regulations, children enrolled at The Pennfield School must be potty trained.

Teachers will ask children throughout the day if they need to use the bathroom, and teachers will assist children as needed. We also understand that accidents happen! Potty training takes a little longer for some. That's OK.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when entering a new environment. Therefore, we will allow a month from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents to determine a solution.

A child will not be considered toilet trained if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first month of school. After the

first four weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents.

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the teacher will meet with the child’s parents to discuss ways for the child to be successful.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, parents will be notified with the understanding that if the issue isn’t corrected by the end of the second week, the child will have to stay home until he or she is completely potty trained. Sometimes it just takes a more time, but eventually everyone is potty trained!

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. Go outside to recess only after the teacher on duty has dismissed you. At the end of recess, 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. 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 Middle 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

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, sit and wait quietly until you are dismissed.

Each day, two Middle 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.

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.

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.

Traditions

8th Grade Dinner

In the Spring, Grade 8 students have the opportunity to have a special dinner with the faculty. The 8th Grade Dinner is a time to celebrate the class's accomplishments and welcome them to the Pennfield alumnae community.

Annual (Corporation) Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of The Pennfield School, held in the spring, is attended by parents, Board of Trustees, and faculty. The Head of School and Board Chair present the annual report and review the year, new trustees are voted in, and faculty members are honored for longevity of service.

Arts Festival

During the Spring, Pennfield hosts the annual Arts Festival, a week dedicated to the arts. A wide variety of performers are brought in during the week. The week cumulates on Friday with age-appropriate workshops and field trips for all students. Parents are invited to contribute their ideas and talents to this exciting week, as well as bring siblings to enjoy the main acts. Each year, traditionally on or near Valentine's Day, the school hosts a bake sale to support the Arts Festival. Children may bring money to buy treats during lunch or snack, and parents are encouraged to purchase as well as bake.

Commencement

Commencement celebrates the graduation of Class 8. The ceremony consists of speeches by the Head of School and the Board Chair, and a guest speaker, musical selections, and presentation of awards and diplomas to the graduates. Grades 5–8 are expected to attend the graduation with their classes. Younger students & their families are also welcome and encouraged to attend this special event. Refreshments are served following the ceremony, provided by the Class 8 Representative and parents.

Field Day

On the day preceding Commencement, after the Primary Department has finished for the year, Classes 1 through 8, divided into "green" and "white" teams, participate in a day of fun and friendly athletic competition. The winning team is announced at the Commencement ceremony. Students in the Primary Department participate in their own Field Day the preceding day.

Grandparents/Special Friends Day

Some live right around the block, others live in Maine or Florida or Arizona, but all of our Grandparents and Special Friends have a cherished place in the hearts of our students! To honor our guests, each year our students and teachers plan a special morning to share breakfast, class projects and an original all-school assembly.

Mark Bistline Golf Tournament

The Pennfield School Annual Golf Tournament is held annually in May. Mark Bistline was a long-time board member, serving as Chair and Vice Chair, and the parent of three Pennfield alumnae. The golf tournament is a major fund raiser for the school.

Teacher Appreciation Day

In the Spring, the PSA salutes our teachers and staff with a week of treats. Under the direction of a PSA volunteer coordinator, the Class Representatives help in the organization of this school-wide show of appreciation.

Thanksgiving Feast

Organized by the PSA, this holiday feast is shared by students and teachers throughout the school before Thanksgiving Break. Each family is asked to supply part of the meal and brings it in fully cooked on Feast Day. Parent volunteers are needed for set up, service, and clean up. In addition, a canned food drive is conducted at this time to benefit a Rhode Island Food Bank.

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. 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. Primary - 3rd Grade will have a mid-winter conference, scheduled by individual teachers during a normal class day. 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 have any academic concerns during the term, 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, 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, wait inside the atrium or out in front of the school with the supervising teacher until your ride arrives.

Field Trips

Broadening horizons by learning outside the school is an integral part of the curriculum at all levels: the Primary Department may visit the fire station, animal shelter, and other important community resources, while older students will venture as far afield as Boston or New York City on a day trip. Middle Schoolers will have at least one overnight trip. Some field trips require parent chaperones and drivers.

Field trips may be related to a specific event, such as the Arts Festival; a special department such as music or science; or linked to an area of study for a particular group. Required permission slips, pertinent information, and any special requirements for the trip will be sent home in advance.

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. 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. 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, or 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 create a welcoming, respectful, and focused learning environment for all students. School should be fun, interactive, and engaging. We encourage students to take pride in their appearance, dress neatly, and choose clothing that is respectful to themselves and the school community.

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 7:55 a.m. until dismissal. The school dress code is to be followed on field trips unless students are otherwise notified. Questions concerning the dress code should be directed to the Assistant Head of School for Students and Faculty.

Every Friday is a Pennfield Spirit Dress Down Day. Students can wear Pennfield gear or green and white clothing. 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.

Students in all grades should wear:

- Clean, neat clothing free from holes, rips, or excessive wear.
- Tops should fully cover the torso and undergarments.
- Skirts, dresses, or pants that are of a modest and appropriate length for school activities.
- Closed-toe shoes or sturdy footwear suitable for recess and movement. Shoes with built-in wheels, flips flops, or slides are not permitted.

Specific guidelines for students in Grades 4 - 8 to maintain a consistent respectful appearance:

- Jeans, sweatpants, and athletic wear are not considered part of daily school attire but may be worn for physical education or Pennfield Spirit Dress Down days.
- Graphic clothing (images or text) should be free of brand advertising, violent imagery, or messages that contradict the school's values.
- Hats should not be worn inside the building. Headwear and religious/cultural garments that reflect students' identities and do not obstruct safety or participation in learning are allowed.

Special Occasions:

For concert presentations or on other special events "concert dress" is worn by all students. All dress code guidelines still apply. "Concert dress" is defined as dresses, skirts, dress pants, 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.

Discipline Policy

Our school is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students. We believe that discipline is about teaching, not punishing. Guided by Responsive Classroom practices, we focus on developing students' social-emotional skills and personal responsibility through reflection, restoration, and collaborative problem-solving.

Minor Behaviors

Minor behaviors are actions that disrupt learning, classroom routines, or school expectations but do not cause harm or pose a safety concern. Examples may include:

- Calling out
- Off-task behavior
- Inappropriate language (non-threatening)
- Physical Contact
- Not following classroom expectations
- Minor disrespect

Process for Responding to Minor Behaviors

1. Immediate Teacher Response

- The teacher addresses the behavior calmly and respectfully using Responsive Classroom strategies (redirecting, reminding, or reinforcing expectations).
- If the behavior persists or warrants reflection, the student completes a **Think Sheet**.

2. Think Sheet Completion

- The student steps aside to complete the Think Sheet in a designated area within the classroom or a quiet space nearby.
- The Think Sheet prompts the student to reflect on:
 - What happened
 - How their behavior affected others
 - How they might handle the situation differently in the future
 - A plan for rejoining the group appropriately

3. Processing the Think Sheet

- The teacher who witnessed the behavior processes the Think Sheet with the student privately.
- Together, they discuss the reflection and agree on a plan to repair any harm (if needed) and prevent future incidents.

4. Documentation and Parent Notification

- The completed Think Sheet is filed in a secure location in the Assistant Head of Schools' office.
- The teacher notifies the student's parents/guardians via email or phone call that day, briefly summarizing the incident and reflection.

Pattern of Repeated Minor Behaviors

- After 3 Think Sheets within a 2-week period:
 - A parent/guardian meeting is scheduled with the student, the teacher(s) involved, and the assistant head of school.
 - The purpose of the meeting is to collaboratively develop a support plan for the student, addressing underlying issues and reinforcing positive behavior expectations.
 - Additional interventions may be introduced as needed (check-ins, mentoring, behavior plans, or restorative conversations).

Major Behaviors

This policy outlines the procedures for addressing major behaviors that significantly disrupt the learning environment, jeopardize the safety or dignity of others, or violate the core values of the school community. Major behaviors are actions that warrant immediate attention due to their serious nature. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- 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

Disciplinary Process

1. Initial Report and Immediate Response

- The incident is reported to the Assistant Head of School.
- Immediate actions are taken to ensure safety and gather preliminary facts.
- Parents/guardians are notified as soon as possible when appropriate.

2. Reflective Documentation

- The student involved is asked to complete a **Reflective Incident Report**, which includes:
 - A factual account of what occurred.
 - Reflection on what led to the incident.
 - Identification of those impacted by their actions.
 - Consideration of alternative choices they could have made.
 - Ideas for repairing harm and restoring trust.

3. Convening the Disciplinary Committee

- The Disciplinary Committee (DC) is convened within a timely manner. This standing committee typically includes:
 - Assistant Head of School
 - Senior Director of Enrollment and External Affairs
 - Director of Student Success
 - One or two other faculty members
- The student may be invited to share their reflective report and perspective during the meeting.

4. Committee Deliberation

- The DC reviews:
 - The facts of the incident.
 - The student's reflective report.
 - Input from impacted parties (when appropriate).
 - The student's prior behavior record.
 - Any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.
- The committee considers the following in recommending a course of action:
 - Severity of the incident.
 - Impact on the school community.
 - The student's willingness to engage in restorative processes.
 - Alignment with school values and the educational mission.

5. Recommendation to the Head of School

- The DC makes a formal written recommendation to the Head of School, which may include:
 - Restorative actions (apologies, community service, educational projects)
 - Disciplinary consequences (detention, suspension, behavioral probation, loss of privileges)
 - Required counseling or support services
 - Other reparative measures deemed appropriate
- In cases where expulsion or separation from the school is under consideration, the Head of School will make the final decision, informed by the committee's recommendation.

6. Communication of Outcome

- The Head of School meets with the student and their parents/guardians to communicate the final decision.
- A written summary is placed in the student's confidential disciplinary file.

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.

Middle School Guidelines

A NOTE TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

As 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Pennfield, this section of the handbook is specifically devoted to you, the students of the Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle School portion of this handbook identifies additional academic requirements, extracurricular offerings, social expectations, and other issues that are specific to Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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.

Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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, Middle 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 students. Students are encouraged to try new things, not just those activities at which they excel. Achieving a comfortable balance is important. Many activities, such as Student Council, spring theatrical production, sports, and club activities involve an after-school commitment.

Spring Theatrical Production

Every spring, 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

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

Every student who wishes to participate in sports may do so. Middle School students may participate during any or all of the three sports seasons. The athletic seasons include soccer and cross country in the fall, 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.

Middle School Social Events

The Middle School faculty chaperone social events, such as dances, for Middle 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 Discipline section of this handbook.

APPENDIX

Electronic Device Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement

Students in 5th grade 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
- 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:**
 - 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!

The Pennfield School



2025–2026 Student Handbook Middle School Personal Responsibility Agreement

I have thoroughly read the Pennfield Student Handbook 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 Middle 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.

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JOY • UNDERSTANDING • RESPECT