



PENFIELD

MONTESSORI ACADEMY

Family Handbook **2020-2021**

“Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe... for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”

- Maria Montessori

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Welcome to Penfield Montessori Academy!

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with our school's policies, procedures and programs. It is given to all parents at the time of enrollment. Extra copies are always available in the main office. If the information you need is not in this book, call or stop in and we will be glad to assist you.

To Contact the School:

Address: 1441 North 24th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Telephone: (414) 999-2330

Fax: (414) 488-3967

E-mail: info@penfieldmontessori.org

Website: www.penfieldmontessori.org

Board of Directors and Staff

Board of Directors	Administration
Christine Holmes: Board President	Mora Anderson, PhD: Head of School
James Burnett	Sangita Nayak: Principal
Danila Danesi	Amy Bontempo: Community Engagement Coordinator
Julie Gilpin	Kara Rivera: Administrative Coordinator
Lisa Van Landeghem	Henry Berry: Receptionist
Robert Mikulay	Facilities and Kitchen
Melissa Murray	Krystal Stollenwerk
Tere Sackerson	Justine Royster
Ronny Thompson	Jon Wing
Deanna Tillisch	Charles Watkins
Stephen Walmsley	
Madonna Williams	

Educational Staff

<p>Montessori Education</p> <p>Children's House Guides</p> <p>Dana Howard Michelle Ravin Sonia Raymonds</p> <p>Lower Elementary Guides</p> <p>Lisa Holewa Dani Merar</p> <p>Upper Elementary Guide:</p> <p>Arthur Kimball</p> <p>Remote Instruction and Inclusion Strategist:</p> <p>Ginnie Kamp</p> <p>Montessori Assistants</p> <p>Maria Castro Donna Cave Dana Chrzanowski Selena Cotto Carly Huibregtse Kym Richardson</p>	<p>Student Support Services</p> <p>Colleen Marchant Williams, M.A.: Student Support Coordinator</p> <p>Special Education Services</p> <p>Jennifer Davis: Special Education Coordinator</p> <p>Learning Strategists</p> <p>Katie Ambrosio Carrie Lawler Tami Reimer Kyle Scheuer</p> <p>Therapists</p> <p>Claire Buchholz: Speech and Language</p> <p>Kathleen Llaurado: Autism Support Strategist</p> <p>Julie Wellenstein: Physical Therapy</p> <p>Casandra Wipperman: Occupational Therapy</p>
<p>Special Education Assistants</p> <p>Emily Behrendt Yvetta Dunomes-Hood Christine Franklin</p>	<p>In-Building Substitute</p> <p>James Mills</p>

About Penfield Montessori

Thank you for choosing Penfield Montessori Academy. We are committed to ensuring that each child is provided with an exceptional experience as part of an innovative, inclusive Montessori program. By working together, parents, students, and school staff will nurture a positive and productive relationship that supports each child’s growth and development.

Guided by the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, Penfield Montessori Academy creates a rich and challenging environment which ensures each child realizes his or her full potential – academically, emotionally, physically, and socially – in a safe, supportive, and culturally diverse setting.

Our Core Values

	We welcome everyone with compassion and empathy, patience and kindness. To lead with love, we look for the best in our co-workers, our families, and ourselves.
	We celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes. We believe there is always a better way asking questions that challenge the status quo, improve our process and make our work easier. Grow with us allows us to focus on how we can improve ourselves and, in the process better serve the children and families in our care
	Together, we can do amazing things. Children and families trust us and depend on us to work as a team to meet their needs. We are better together when we maximize our strengths, the gifts of our colleagues and the commitment of our amazing partners.
	We are determined, motivated, and adaptable. We solve problems. We own our work, our actions, and our behaviors. We step up to help our co-workers, partners, and our families. We do what it takes to get the job done right and done well.
	We bring our best, genuine self to everything we do. Being present allows us to bring our passion and commitment to our work to ensure the best possible outcome for Penfield.

Our Mission

Penfield Montessori will meet the unique education, family engagement, and health and wellness needs of each individual learner in a safe, supportive, and diverse academic environment.

Our Vision

To demonstrate a pathway for more children to graduate from high school by tailoring the education experience to each individual child.

Three Pillars

Montessori Education

Family Engagement

Health and Wellness

Admissions

Penfield Montessori Academy admits students of any gender, race, color, creed, ethnicity, and national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Penfield Montessori Academy policy of nondiscrimination due to disability complies with U.S. Department of Education regulations for the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

All children K3 through fourth grade are eligible for admission, subject to openings for appropriate age groups. Priority admission status is granted to siblings of Penfield students and children of Penfield employees.

The Admissions Process

1. The school highly encourages that interested parents make an appointment to tour the school and observe classrooms in session.
2. Applications are accepted for enrollment beginning on November 1st and ending February 28th. Applications will be made available on the school website and in the school office throughout this time frame.
3. If the number of applications submitted by eligible applicants during the application period exceeds the number of available seats, acceptance will be determined by a lottery. If the number of applicants does not exceed the number of seats available, a lottery selection is not necessary, and all applicants will be admitted to the school.
4. At the time of the lottery, all applicants not receiving a seat will be put on a waiting list. The waiting list is determined in the order that the lottery numbers are drawn. Any applications received after February 28th will be added to the waiting list in the order they are received.

5. Because seats in K4 and up only become available through attrition, a lottery will be held after each application period and a waiting list will be created. Students will be accepted from the waiting list when, and if, a seat becomes available.
6. Openings in the school are offered to those on the waiting list in strict numerical order. An applicant cannot defer an offer and keep his/her spot on the waiting list. If an offer is declined, that applicant is removed from the waiting list and the opening is offered to the next applicant.
7. The waiting list is only valid until September 30th. Applications will not be carried over to the following school year. New applications must be submitted. The application process for the next school year begins November 1st.

About the Montessori Approach

Montessori is both a philosophy of child development and a method of education used to Guide and support a child's growth. At all levels, the Montessori classrooms are dynamic communities of learners and Guides (teachers).

The Guide

Rather than a traditional teacher, the learning in a Montessori classroom is facilitated by a specially trained Montessori Guide. The Guide is a facilitator whose task it is to support the young child in his or her process of self-development.

The Guide presents lessons to the child in a precise, clear, and enticing way when he or she is ready. The Guide keeps parents and families updated on each child's progress and collaborates with families. The most important attribute of a Guide is the love and respect s/he holds for each child's total being.

The Prepared Environment

Each environment is designed to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the children within the class. Guides adapt the environment by modifying the selection of educational materials available, the physical layout and equipment in the classroom, and by shifting the tone of the class to fit the ever-changing needs of the children. Generally, students work individually or in small self-selected groups. Community meetings or "group times" are scheduled so as not to interrupt the child's work and are usually held at transitional points during the day.

A Multi-Age Community of Learners

Montessori classrooms are communities of children and adults. The classroom consists of children from a multi-age span of three years. This creates a "family like" group where older children help care

for, as well as, model lessons, work habits, respectful language, and expected behaviors to the younger children. Meanwhile, younger children look up to and learn from the older children. Varying levels of ability blend easily in a multi-age setting; no child feels left behind, and everyone learns at their own pace.

The Process of Learning

Montessori materials allow for hands-on learning, active involvement, and self-directed activity. Montessori materials often have a control of error that alerts the child when they have completed the activity incorrectly. This allows children to work independently, unafraid to make mistakes. This also helps the child to become comfortable with the fact that errors are essential to the process of learning. While making independent choices and exploring concepts largely on their own, Montessori students become independent and confident individuals.

Children are intrinsically motivated to learn because they are interested in gaining an understanding of the world around them. In a Montessori classroom, children do not work for grades or external rewards. There are three stages of learning a new concept or lesson, which may occur over several weeks:

1. **Introduction to a concept:** Introduction to a concept can occur both inside and outside of the classroom. It may occur through receiving an initial lesson from the Guide using materials that illustrate its main ideas, or through observations and exploration within the child's community.
2. **Processing and practicing the concept:** The child develops an understanding of the concept through working with hands-on materials that provide opportunity for exploration, experimentation, and repetition of an activity.
3. **Mastering the concept:** The child is confidently able to explain and teach the concept to another student or adult.

Our Programs

The Children's House (3-6-Year-Old)

Dr. Montessori called the first six years of life the period of the "absorbent mind." During this time, young children are exploding into learning, gaining independence, and wanting to master skills by themselves. The focus at this level is on aiding the child's development of personal responsibility and social-emotional skills using practical, concrete materials.

Children begin learning practical life skills that develop their concentration, independence, fine and gross motor skills, and personal and community responsibility. These practical life lessons include care of self (washing hands, tying shoes, zipping coats, preparing food) and care of the environment (watering plants, washing tables, sweeping floors). As students move through the three-year cycle, they engage in hands-on activities which provide them with the fundamentals of reading, writing, and grammar. Through manipulation of concrete materials, they also learn the decimal system and mathematical operations.

Children are introduced to physical and cultural geography through puzzle maps, pictures, books, and special presentations by parents and Guides. The arts are woven throughout the curriculum to support a creative and interdisciplinary approach. Social skills, as well as the ability to make appropriate choices, are practiced through Grace and Courtesy lessons and peer problem solving.

In the Montessori class there is freedom of movement that enables the child to work alone at a table, on the floor, or in a group with one or two others at any given time. Within this environment, learning happens through discovery, exploration, and in cooperation with others.

The morning session of the Children's House program begins at 8:00 am and ends at 11:00 am for K3 students. At that time, parents of 3-year-old have the option of picking up their children, or enrolling them in PEP, Penfield's wraparound, pre-pay childcare program.

Extended Day for K4 and K5 Children

After 11:00am, K4 and K5 students remain for lunch, recess, and a full afternoon of academic programming in the classroom. The school day for these students ends at 3:00pm. At that time, parents have the option of picking up their children, or enrolling them in PEP, Penfield's wraparound, paid childcare program.

Lower Elementary (6-9-Year-Old)

Somewhere around children's sixth year of life, they begin to transition from the first plane of development, "the absorbent mind", to the second plane, the "cosmic mind." This is when children begin to move from concrete materials and ideas to abstract tools and thinking.

Dr. Montessori described children at the lower elementary stage as having unlimited interests in the universe and their place in it. It is an age of social awakening and responsibility. Children begin to

insist on justice and fair play and need to have exact rules. They search for the why, the how, and the when of things. Therefore, when children enter the lower elementary program, they begin to work with larger intellectual concepts and concentrate on more advanced skills. Students are presented with all subject areas and are allowed the freedom to explore the things that spark their imagination in as much depth as they desire. In addition to the facts that are learned, it is equally important that the children develop a rigorous questioning and investigative process within themselves. Students learn what questions must be asked, how to think through problems, how to analyze situations, and how to find answers for themselves. In the lower elementary classroom, Montessori-trained adults can integrate the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as a part of a whole intellectual tradition. Montessori calls this integration of subjects “Cosmic Education.”

Students in the lower elementary classroom are expected to become increasingly responsible for their own education. Continued joy in learning, self-discipline in one’s work, organization of one’s time, respect for classmates, and participation in the community of both the classroom, and the community at large are the hallmarks of success in the Montessori lower elementary classroom.

As We Grow: Upper Elementary (9-12-Year-Old) and Adolescence (12-14-Year-Old)

Every year, Penfield Montessori Academy plans to add an additional grade. The school expects to be fully grown, extending to the 8th grade, in 2024-2025. Over time, as Upper Elementary and Adolescent classrooms are added, Guides will adapt the learning environments to the developmental needs of each classroom’s age range.

Wrap-around Child Care: Penfield Enrichment Program (PEP)

The Penfield Enrichment Program (PEP) is a prepay, wrap-around childcare program located at Penfield Montessori Academy. Enrollment information can be found at the front desk.

PEP hours of operation are 7:00am - 7:30am and 11:00 am – 5:30 pm on school days and some school-out days. Families will meet with the PEP Site Supervisor to determine the hours and days of attendance needed for their child(ren). The schedule of care needed will then determine the total tuition costs. Families will have the option of paying privately or obtaining authorization for subsidized funding through the State for payment. Statements reflecting the status of bills will be sent home with PEP students weekly. Payment can be made online for EBT cardholders. For all others, payment can be made via cash, credit card or check (made out to “Penfield Montessori Academy”). A payment box for PEP is located outside the Administrative Office.

PEP for K3

Families with three-year-old children have the option of enrolling K3s in our fee-based afternoon program. In order to qualify for this program, a child must be three years old on the first day of school and attend the morning school program. Programming begins at 11:00am and consists of recess, lunch, rest, and Montessori-inspired free-play. K3 programming ends at 3:00pm in conjunction with the end of the school day. After-school paid programming is also available from 3:00-5:30pm.

PEP - After School

All children attending Penfield Montessori Academy are welcome to enroll in prepay PEP programming after school. Enriching activities such as Montessori-inspired free play, snack, and gross-motor activities are all part of our after-school program. This program begins at 3:00 pm and all children must be picked up by 5:30pm closing time. Parents must come to the PEP classroom to pick up their child. Drop-in care is offered when space is available. Please call the school as soon as the need becomes known to verify space.

PEP - No School Days

The school calendar outlines student non-attendance dates for the school year. PEP is offered for many of the student non-attendance days for a fee. These days are determined by the Programs Coordinator and are staffed according to need. Sign-up and payment in advance are required for admittance.

Hours of Operation

The school building is open on student and staff attendance days from 7:30 am. until 5:30 p.m. during Phase 2 (B): Hybrid and Phase 3 (C): Live. However, during Phase 1 (A) Remote, the building will remain closed to the community.

School Procedures

School Start

School starts promptly at 8:00am. In a Montessori environment, students need three hours of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat this work to their own satisfaction; therefore, it is important that your children arrive at school on time. Being five or ten minutes late may seem like a small issue, however it can drastically disrupt the rhythm and flow of the entire Montessori classroom.

Parking

Because our parking lot is so busy, patience and caution are required when you are in the school parking lot at drop-off and pick-up times. The north two rows of the parking lot are reserved for parent parking. Please drive slowly and be very careful when entering and exiting the parking lot. Also, please make sure your vehicle is not blocking transport vehicles or vehicles needing to utilize disabled parking from entering through the gate opening.

Breakfast Drop-Off

Breakfast is served in the gym beginning at 7:30am and ending at 7:50am. If your child is having breakfast with us, make sure s/he arrives early enough to finish eating by 7:50am. At that time, Guides will line the students up and walk them to their classroom. We ask that parents say goodbye in the gym and let their children go upstairs with their class.

After-Breakfast Drop-Off

If your child arrives after the lower level doors have closed, please use the main entrance and wait for your child's classroom to arrive. School starts promptly at 8:00am. If you arrive after 8:00 am, your child(ren) will be marked tardy. Please sign them in at the front office upon arrival. Parents are encouraged to let students hang up their personal belongings and walk into their classrooms on their own, fostering a sense of independence. Breakfast is not available for children arriving late to school.

Dismissal

Children in the K3 program will end their school day at 11:00am and be picked up from their classroom. The school day for children in K4, K5, and elementary programs ends at 3:00pm. At that time, students are to be picked up in the gym. When students are picked up, they are encouraged to shake a staff member's hand in order to help them develop positive social skills. They are required to

say goodbye in order to inform the staff they are leaving. Children needing to stay after the assigned pick-up time can be enrolled in PEP, our licensed, paid childcare program.

Late Pick-Up

Please arrange to have your child picked up promptly at dismissal time (3:00pm). Your cooperation in this is vital because we do not have the staff available to supervise late pick-ups. In the event you are late for pick-up, your child will be sent to PEP after a ten-minute grace period, and a late fee of \$10.00, along with the PEP drop-in fee will apply.

PEP Pick-Up

Parents of children enrolled in PEP must come to the PEP classroom to pick up their child(ren) before school closing time of 5:30pm.

Food Program and Nutrition

Breakfast

Our school participates in the Universal Free Breakfast program. Breakfast from this program will be served in the gym free of charge to all children from 7:30am – 7:50am. If your child arrives after 7:50, breakfast will no longer be available.

A healthy morning snack is served during the school day to our students daily. This provides them with an opportunity to practice food preparation and Grace and Courtesy skills. Parents are asked to provide fruits, vegetables, grains, or protein-based items for morning snack on a rotating basis. All Penfield children receive a morning snack regardless of parent participation.

Lunch

Nutrition is an everyday part of our program. Lunch is served in the classroom and all meals provided by Penfield Montessori follow USDA Guidelines. Menus are provided to cover the four basic food groups and varieties of food are served to enhance and develop a wide sense of taste. Currently our hot lunch program is provided through a contract with the Milwaukee Center for Independence. A monthly menu will be sent home with your child and posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway.

We encourage parents who send lunch with their children to only have nutritional food items in their lunch each day. Please try to eliminate junk food from your child's diet. We ask that if you are going

to send a snack or treat to school with your child that it not be sweets, candy, chips, or other “junk food”.

Allergies

If your child is allergic to any food or requires a specially prepared diet, please let us know. This information is shared with the school staff to ensure that your child does not have contact with any of these items and that they are only eating foods that their special diet allows. Food allergies and medical needs must be documented by your child’s physician on our Medical Statement for Special Dietary Needs form. Allergies of individual children are posted in a prominent place in the food preparation areas and classroom.

Unless indicated by a child’s IEP, food will not be used as a punishment or reward. Please see the school’s Wellness Policy for further information.

Classroom Policies

Observing

Staff at PMA want very much to collaborate with parents as we all work toward providing a nurturing, safe and successful school environment. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s classroom Guide (teacher) to arrange visits to observe in the classroom. Cell phone usage is prohibited in classrooms and parents are asked to turn them off during the observation time. If your phone must be used, please step out of the room to an empty area to handle the call or text. This is your time to observe and see your child during the busy school day and the students enjoy seeing parents visit.

Behavior Expectations

Parents will be provided a copy of the PMA Discipline Policy and will sign it and turn in the signature page. That document provides parents the details. As a summary, here are key points regarding behavior expectations:

If a child has difficulty following the rules of the community, PMA will follow a progressive discipline plan that works with the parent(s), staff, and the community. The discipline plan is instructional, rather than punitive in nature, and focuses on prevention of undesirable behaviors and addresses behaviors through teaching of desirable behaviors and using SEL. (Social Emotional Competencies)

The entire school community, including the administration, teachers, support staff, students, and parents are responsible for modeling appropriate behavior, helping to maintain the order and neatness of the school environment, and reporting any violations of Guidelines or safety concerns to a member of the administrative team. Relatedly, addressing any behavioral concerns exhibited by students must happen in partnership with parents or guardians. Working with parents or guardians ensures the school understands important context for student's behavior and positive strategies that may be helpful to school personnel in responding and resolving any concerns as quickly as possible.

Snack

As part of PMA's Health and Wellness pillar, our snack and food Guidelines are especially important to us. We believe in a strict snack and food policy as we are teaching students to nurture and care for themselves. Nutritious snacks and lunches can be a challenge in a world full of fast and convenient foods. This policy is to assist parents in determining what are appropriate foods to send with your child.

The Montessori curriculum encourages children to help pack their lunches or prepare snack for their class. Please refrain from sending your child to school with candy, fast food, and high sugar items. Here are some healthy snack ideas.

- Fruit
- Vegetables (with or without dip)
- Cheese and crackers
- Pretzels
- Goldfish or other crackers
- Mini bagels with cream cheese
- Pita bread and humus
- Popcorn, air popped
- Hard boiled eggs
- Yogurt
- String Cheese

Your child's Montessori Guide can provide you with more ideas in which you can model health and wellness for your family.

Clothing

Label! Label! Label!

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is weather appropriate and that is easy for them to manage independently. Clothes that are too good to risk staining should not be worn to school. Soft-soled shoes are also advised.

Children should always have an extra set of clothing available. This complete change will include seasonally appropriate shirts, pants or shorts, underwear, and socks. Please send them to school in a labeled zip-lock plastic bag. If this clothing is sent home used, please send back replacements the next day. Children are not to wear pull-ups at school unless they have an IEP that specifically allows the use of training wear. Each classroom has slightly different requirements so please watch for additional information from your child's teacher.

Remember, we try to spend time outside every day so please provide warm clothing in the winter such as hats, mittens, waterproof boots, and snow-pants. In general, children not well enough to go outside should stay home.

Anything and everything that can become detached from your child and which you would like returned must be labeled. Because we emphasize independence, our children are responsible for their own things at an earlier age than in many other places. This results in more misplaced articles of clothing, so please help us by labeling everything! There is a lost and found in the main office. All labeled clothing will be returned to the child's hook.

Toilet Training

It is our expectation that all students can appropriately toilet themselves before attending school. Therefore, upon entering school at PMA, your child(ren) must be toilet trained. The only exception to this rule is for students who have an IEP that addresses the additional toileting support the child needs while at school. In instances where students are not toilet trained, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school.

Specifically:

- Children must wear traditional underwear to school, not pull-ups or other absorbent undergarments.

- Children must be able to independently recognize the need to use the toilet and get to the toilet in a timely manner without having accidents.
- Children must be able to use the toilet without the help of a potty chair or training seat.

PMA staff will assist the child by:

- Encouraging children to let teachers know when they need to use the toilet.
- Reminding students to use the bathroom frequently.
- Helping children on and off the toilet.
- Assisting with attire.
- Reminding children to flush the toilet and wash hands after use.

Enforcement:

We realize that accidents will happen. An accident is an unusual incident that happens infrequently. When the staff notes an increase in frequency or a new pattern of accidents, a conversation will be had with the parents and the Guide to discuss the best way to help the child learn to use the toilet.

If it is determined that a child needs additional time to learn to consistently use the bathroom independently, the student will be asked to leave the program until he/she is fully trained. The student's place in the school will be saved and they may return to PMA when they are fully toilet trained.

Rest Time

All primary (K3-K5) children will be provided with a 20-30-minute rest period after lunch. Students do not need to sleep but are required to rest at that time. Once rest time is over, students who are awake will resume work in the classroom while those who are sleeping may continue to do so until they wake on their own. If you would like your child to be woken up, please let the classroom Guide know. You may bring a small blanket for your child to use during rest time. It must be labeled with your child's name and kept at school. We will launder it once a week.

Objects From Home

Students are welcome to occasionally bring meaningful show and tell items to share with the class. These may include shells, rocks, something they have made, books, a personal treasure, or some other item of interest. Please discourage children from bringing toys such as play dolls, cars, trucks, stuffed animals, etc. If a child brings non-educational playthings into the classroom, these items will be stored by the Guide until dismissal. Please check with your child's Guide if you have any questions.

Seasonal Celebrations

Seasonal celebrations such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Years, Kwanzaa etc. are all recognized from a cultural point of view. Although we acknowledge all holidays, we offer no religious training. If your child comes from a cultural background that has a different New Year or other holiday, please tell the Guide and allow the child to share the event with the class. If, for any reason, you do not want your child to participate in any celebration, please inform the school ahead of time so other arrangements can be made for your child.

Birthdays

For birthdays, each child is honored in a special celebration that is an international Montessori tradition. Parents share in this important occasion by helping their child select photographs from each year of his or her life and/or helping the child write about different milestones and experiences that occurred during each year of their life. These photos and memories are shared as the child walks “around the sun,” one time for each year celebrated. Parents should make every effort to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child. Parents may also bring in a special healthy treat to share with the children and teachers in the class. Please honor the Montessori environment by refraining from the use of cartoon characters, sugary sweet treats, and other things that will distract from learning. Your child’s Guide will discuss this with you before the celebration.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent out four times per year for Children’s House and Elementary students (once at fall conferences and at the end of each trimester). In addition, Penfield Montessori Academy uses school software: Transparent Classroom and See Saw (new in 2020) to allow parents and Guides to stay in touch throughout the school year. Each Guide keeps a record of all the lessons and presentations a child has been given, as well as concepts the child has mastered or is practicing.

Conferences

Parent/Guide conferences are held two times per year (see calendar). Other conferences requested by staff or parents will be arranged as needed. Conferences are a great opportunity for the Guide and the parents to have a conversation about the student’s work in the classroom, areas identified for growth, and communication around areas for improvement. There is a high expectation that parents work closely with the Guide to coordinate a date and time that works for them to participate in all conferences.

School Policies

Absence and Tardy Policies

Research shows there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success, while absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement. It is key that students come to school every day in order to learn the importance of coming to school and arriving on time.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school at 414-999-2330 as early as possible if your child is going to be absent. Please provide us with all information concerning the absence that is available at the time. If your child is not in school and you have not called in, the school will contact you within two hours of the beginning of the school day.

A student absence becomes excused when the parent/guardian contacts the school either through writing, email, text, or phone call. If a child is absent for a prolonged period due to illness, a written excuse (doctor's note) must be given to the school upon the child's return to school.

The following are excused absences. All other absences are regarded as truanancies.

- Personal illness
- Funerals
- Required legal appearances
- Designated religious holidays
- Medical or dental appointments
- Family emergencies – student absences which contribute to the health, safety, or financial well-being of the family
- Educationally beneficial activities pre-approved by the Head of School
- Parent-excused absences – Parents or guardians may excuse an absence by submitting written notification to the school for any or no reason prior to the student's absence. A student may be excused for up to ten (10) days per year under this provision.

Late Arrivals

Our school is charged with the task of teaching grace and courtesy to our students, as well as personal responsibility. At Penfield Montessori Academy, we want our students to learn that being good work partners and community members requires both regular attendance in the classroom as

well as being on time. To help reinforce this development, we have established the following Guidelines:

- When a student has **5 tardies** in quick succession, the director of family engagement will make a phone call home to talk to the parents about how tardiness is impacting the student and to discuss ways the school can help the family to be on time.
- a letter will be sent home notifying the parents that their student has been tardy 5 times.
- After **10 tardies**, another letter will be sent home. The director of family engagement will also make a phone call home to talk to the parents about how tardiness is impacting the student and to discuss ways to be on time.
- After **15 tardies**, yet another letter will be sent home, and the school counselor will have a conference with the parents and teacher to discuss the problem.
- With **20 tardies**, the case will be referred to the Head of School.

All children who arrive after 8:00 am must be brought to the office and signed in by an adult before they go to class.

Truancy Policy

Public schools in Wisconsin are required to report attendance information to the State Department of Public Instruction. Names of students who have had five or more unexcused absences are reported to state authorities.

Parent Notification

1. The school will notify the parent or guardian of a student who is truant from school before the end of the first day of the unexcused absence. Notification may be made by telephone.

2. The school will notify the parent or guardian of a student who is habitually truant when the child has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences within a school year.

- The notice will be in writing and will be sent by certified or registered mail.
- The notice will request that the parent or guardian meet with school personnel within five (5) school days of the date of the notice to discuss the student's truancy. The date for the meeting can be extended for an additional five (5) days with parental consent.
- If a meeting is not held within ten (10) school days after the date of the notice, the school may take the necessary steps to impose penalties on the parent or guardian who fails to cause the student to attend school regularly, as detailed in state statutes and municipal codes.

Truancy Intervention/Prevention Strategies

1. Parent notification
2. Community Engagement Coordinator referral
3. Municipal Citations
4. Referral to the District Attorney

Health and Injury Policies

Health Policy

Children who are sick require the special attention that being at home provides. Children cannot be permitted to attend school with any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Vomiting on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours
- Illness related diarrhea – within the previous 24-hour period
- Draining rash
- Fatigue or irritability that prevents participation in regular activities
- Communicable diseases, which require treatment

Children who are not well enough to go outside for playtime are not well enough to come to school. If illness occurs while your child is at school, the office staff will notify you. Your child will be sent to the administrative office and cared for by the administrative staff until he or she is picked up. You are responsible for arranging for or picking up your child from school as soon as possible. Children may return to school when:

- Illness related vomiting & diarrhea have ended for 24 hours
- The student has been on any prescribed medications for at least 24 hours
- There is no discharge from rash

Administration of Medications at School

Whenever possible the administration of prescription medication should be scheduled during non-school hours. However, when necessary, prescription medication will be administered to a student by Penfield personnel. A completed **Medication Permission and Instruction Form** must be submitted. This form can be obtained from the school nurse or in the school office. This form includes clear

instructions from your child(ren)'s doctor, including but not limited to, the type of medication to be given, the dosage required, the doctor's signature, and your written consent. This form is valid from the date of the doctor's signature to the end of the current school year. Also note that:

- If changes are made, such as dose or time the dose is given, a new form must be completed and signed by the doctor.
- If prescribed medication is to be discontinued, the parent must bring in the medical order signed by the child's physician.
- You are responsible for ensuring that the medication is delivered to the school safely and that there is enough medication to follow the doctor's orders.
- All prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container identifying the pharmacy, date the prescription was filled, the child's name, medication name, dosage, time of day the medication is to be taken, and doctor's name. In addition, any potential side effects of the medication should be listed. Medications in any other container will not be accepted.

The school has the right to refuse prescribed medications for your child or to stop providing your child with prescription medications if you do not follow the regulations and policy of the school. Call the school nurse at 414-999-2330 if you have concerns.

Your child can be given a non-prescription medication, such as cough syrup or over-the-counter medication, only if you have given written permission. These medications must be given to the school nurse and kept in the Wellness Center in a designated safe storage place. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original container and must be labeled with your child's name and dosage.

If your child needs to carry an inhaler, a **Medication Permission and Instruction Form** must be provided to the school, and you must sign and submit a **Release for Inhaler Use Form** stating that the child knows how to use the inhaler. Children must show the school nurse that they are professionally trained and understand the importance of proper handling/use of the inhaler. Inhalers will be kept in the student's backpack during school hours and in designated classroom first aid storage space during after school care (PEP).

Injury Policy

If your child is injured while attending Penfield Montessori, first aid will be administered. An accident report will be completed by the staff member who was present at the time the incident occurred. You will be provided with a copy of this and one copy will be kept at the school. If treatment by a doctor is

needed, we will make every effort to contact you and we will make sure your child receives the necessary emergency treatment until we can reach you.

Emergency Medical Treatment

All staff members are trained bi-annually on CPR and first aid. In addition, a Heart start Defibrillator is installed in the main hall by the office and select staff members are trained on its use. When a child needs emergency treatment while at school or off site at a school sponsored event, every effort is made to contact the parents or emergency contacts. If such cannot be reached, the paramedics will be called, and the child and a staff member will be transported to Sinai/ Samaritan Hospital for medical help. In order to ensure that we can contact you, please keep the office up to date on any telephone number and emergency contact changes.

Behavior and Discipline Policy

Penfield Montessori Academy is a community based on three principles: respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment. It is our intention to be a safe, supportive, nurturing place for all members of our community — students, families and staff.

Students learn that Penfield is a place of peace, grounded by mutual respect and care for the community. Our goal is to help students arrive at inner discipline, developing the skills necessary to understand their impact and control their actions. This is an ongoing process, supported by focused work, adult modeling, and guidance.

Penfield Montessori Academy encourages community members to show respect and celebrate differences using our culturally responsive classroom competencies. We foster a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation whether physical, social, emotional, or verbal.

Penfield Montessori Academy's focus, based on the Montessori pedagogy, is to teach students how to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with feelings
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- Participate in their education

Children are offered freedoms based on their ability to make appropriate choices. As the child's ability to self-regulate and make choices improves, more freedoms are offered.

We understand that our work must happen in partnership with families. This ensures that the school team understands the important context for student behavior, and positive strategies to respond to behavior issues.

Violations of our Guidelines, or other safety concerns, can be addressed to a member of the administrative team.

If a child has difficulty following the expectations of the school community, PMA will follow a progressive guidance plan, focused on preventing disruptive behaviors and teaching skills for contributing in a positive way to the community.

Progressive Guidance Approach

- **Manageable Behaviors:** Classroom staff establishes clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for behavior, and then teaches and reinforces these. Approaches to reinforcing behavioral expectations include personal attention, redirection, distraction, removal from the situation, reminders, emotional coaching, mediation between students, and modeling by adults. Classroom staff also develop family partnerships to support the classroom expectations.
- **Ongoing or repeated behavior issues:** If a student is not responding to classroom management, families will be consulted, and a school-based team will review the behavior issues and work with teachers to create interventions. Families may be offered a referral for additional support services. Intended outcomes are identified and monitored. If necessary, the school team will reconvene to implement different strategies or move to a more intensive intervention approach as noted below in Crisis Behaviors.
- **Crisis Behaviors:** The school team will request a formal Functional Behavioral Analysis (FBA) to determine the function of the behavior. An FBA is conducted when a student's behavior significantly interferes with the student's learning or that of others. The family is consulted and is an integral part of the FBA process. Typically, these plans include some level of service by professionals outside of the classroom, and these services will be noted in the plan. Actions

that create an unsafe environment for the child or others or make it impossible for other students to access their education, cannot be tolerated. Such behaviors include but are not limited to repeated acts of harassment, aggressive sexualized behaviors and aggressive play that causes physical harm. The team will reconvene to adjust the plan if necessary, celebrate the success of the child, or determine that the child needs additional support. If a child's behavior is so extreme or inappropriate that an immediate intervention is necessary, a member of the administration and an adult witness will call the parents to come in immediately for action. If a parent cannot respond or if additional support is needed, another outside agency such as the Mobile CMC (Children's Mobile Crisis Team) may be contacted.

Suspensions and Expulsions

Penfield Montessori will offer an in-school suspension option when appropriate. The focus of this suspension is to maintain academic work, provide opportunities to repair the relationships that may have been damaged, and to facilitate family involvement in the resolution of the suspension.

Out-of-School suspensions are only used as a last resort and for legitimate educational purposes. A suspension of up to three days can occur if the student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities.

A suspension longer than three days or expulsion is only allowed if other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted and the student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to safety or substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school.

School Closing and Inclement Weather Policies

Penfield Montessori Academy will be closed whenever Milwaukee Public Schools are closed. Watch or listen to local news channels for information, check Penfield Montessori's Facebook page, website, or visit the MPS website for immediate updates.

The school Receptionist will check weather conditions to determine the appropriateness of outdoor activity. If the wind chill is below 10 °F, the temperature is above 90 °F, or there is excessive rain (very wet conditions), then students will not be taken outside.

If students must stay indoors for recess, they will be asked to play appropriate indoor games in the gym.

Transportation Policy

Penfield Montessori Academy does not offer transportation to our students. If your child is found to have a special education need, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team will decide on an individual basis whether the student with special education needs requires transportation as a “related service” in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). If the IEP team determines that the student with special education needs requires transportation due to their unique special education needs, only then will PMA provide transportation.

Building Safety Procedures

A Fire Safety inspection of the Penfield Montessori Academy building is completed annually. PMA conducts fire drills on a monthly basis throughout the year and inspects fire extinguishers and emergency lights annually. The school also has a written Crisis Plan that is reviewed on an annual or as needed basis. It contains standard procedures for various emergency situations. All staff members are required to be familiar with these procedures. A copy of the Crisis Plan is available in the main office.

A copy of the Wisconsin State Daycare licensing rules, our current license, and notice of any violations are also available and are located both in the main office and in the entranceway of the PEP program.

Each parent receives a Parent Handbook that contains the school’s policies. A duplicate copy is always available in the office.

Annual Asbestos Notification

In compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, the school must inform you of the results of our compliance with AHERA. In 2016, the required inspection for asbestos containing building materials was completed in our school building. During the initial inspection it was found that asbestos-containing materials and asbestos-containing building materials were used in the building. The specific type of material and the location are further identified in the Inspection Report. We will continue to have professional inspections done every three years and perform six-month surveillance.

The initial findings and management plans, along with re-inspections, periodic surveillances, and response actions are available for inspection in the office of the Head of School. The school will continue to take whatever steps are necessary in order to ensure our children and employees have a

healthy, safe environment in which to learn and work, as well as to comply with federal, state, and local regulations.

Campus Policies: Expectations of Adults in the Building

Title 1 School

Because Penfield Montessori Academy is a Title 1 school (we receive additional federal funding based on specific criteria), parents have the right to information about the teachers' and paraprofessionals' qualifications. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Completion of state license and certification requirements
- Emergency or provisional licensing status
- Educational background

Cell Phone Use

Cell phone use in the building is prohibited except for official school business. If you are visiting the school and need to use your cell phone, please step out of the classroom and keep calls as short as possible. All phones must be silenced within classrooms.

No Substance Abuse Policy

PMA prohibits the use, purchase, transfer, possession, or presence in one's system of any alcohol or controlled substances while on school premises or engaged in Penfield business. This includes field trips and outings away from school premises or during transport of Penfield staff and students.

No Smoking Policy

PMA is a smoke-free environment. There is no smoking in PMA buildings or anywhere on the grounds.

No Weapons Policy

PMA prohibits the possession of, use of, or threat to use any type of weapon on PMA premises. A weapon is defined as a gun, knife, razor, karate stick, metal knuckle, or any other object that, in use or intended use, is capable of inflicting bodily harm.

No Harassment Policy

PMA will not tolerate any form of verbal, physical, or sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, joking remarks, or any other abusive conduct directed at students, employees, or parents because of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Any conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment will not be tolerated.

Procedures for Conflict Resolution and Formal Complaints

PMA staff is committed to building partnerships with parents. Due to the extensive involvement of families in the school and the respect and appreciation they are afforded, we hope concerns voiced by families are addressed satisfactorily before they become complaints. However, in any school, situations may arise where a family feels their child or family member is not being treated fairly or differences of opinion about school policies may exist. Should you feel you have a problem, we encourage you to discuss it with your child's Guide first. The Guides are your first resource to answer questions and help resolve difficulties. If the Guide is unable to resolve the question, please address your concern to the Community Engagement Coordinator. This includes grievances that may be associated with decisions that affect student access to eligibility, enrollment, and transportation in the event of homelessness. We want to assure you that if you raise a complaint it is not held against you or your child in any way. We value relationships with our parents.

If informal discussion does not resolve an issue, a formal process may be pursued.

1. The family may present a written complaint and the remedy being sought to the Principal within five school days of the informal discussion. The Principal shall meet with the family and any professional staff involved in the issue within five school days following the submission of the written complaint to attempt to settle the issue. The Principal shall issue a written answer within five school days following the meeting.
2. If the complaint is not settled, the family shall submit a grievance in writing to the Head of School within five school days following the receipt of the response of the Principal. The Head of School will respond in writing.
3. If the family is still dissatisfied with the response, they may submit a grievance in writing to the Penfield Montessori Academy (PMA) Board within 10 school days after the receipt of the response from the Head of School.
4. The PMA Board shall forward its final decision in writing to the family, the Head of School, the Principal, and any staff member involved.

For complaints please contact:

Ms. Sangita, Nayak, Principal

sangitanayak@penfieldmontessori.org

(414) 999-2340

Title IX-Non-Discrimination Policy

The Penfield Montessori Academy Board does not discriminate on the basis of national origin, ancestry, race, color, creed, sex, age, disability, physical appearance, sexual orientation, religion, pregnancy, marital or family status, or political affiliation in its educational programs, related activities (including School-Community Recreation) and employment practices.

If a student believes that he/she has been discriminated against, he/she may make a claim that his/her rights have been denied. Parents may obtain a copy of the grievance procedure and receive assistance in filing a complaint on behalf of the child by contacting the Principal, who serves as the TITLE IX / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COORDINATOR for the school.