



# PENFIELD

## MONTESSORI ACADEMY

### **Family and Student Handbook 2022-2023**

“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 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53205  
Telephone: (414) 999-2330  
Fax: (414) 488-3967  
E-mail: [info@penfieldmontessori.org](mailto:info@penfieldmontessori.org)  
Website: [www.penfieldmontessori.org](http://www.penfieldmontessori.org)

**Board of Directors and Staff**

<p><b><u>Board of Directors</u></b></p> <p>Christine Holmes Board President</p> <p>James Burnett Danila Danesi Chris Due Julie Gilpin Lisa Van Landeghem Julia Magnasco Robert Mikulay Kimberly Rennie, Ph. D Tere Sackerson Sue Sager Robert Schwartz Ronny Thompson Madonna Williams Karin Gale Member-At-Large</p>	<p><b><u>Administration</u></b></p> <p>Mora Anderson, PhD Head of School</p> <p>Michelle Ravin Principal</p> <p><b><u>Office</u></b></p> <p>Kara Rivera Administrative Coordinator</p> <p>Henry Berry Family Liasion</p> <p>Krystal Stollenwerk Food Director</p> <p>Daleyah Williams Administrative Assistant</p> <p><b><u>Facilities</u></b></p> <p>Karie Anderson Facilities Director</p> <p>Charles Watkins James Moore</p>
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**Educational Staff**

<p><b><u>Montessori Education</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Children's House Guides</u></b></p> <p>Sonia Raymonds Maria Castro Von Barker</p> <p><b><u>Lower Elementary Guides</u></b></p> <p>Mack Krutchen Emily Mehlhorn Dani Merar</p> <p><b><u>Upper Elementary Guides</u></b></p> <p>Bridget Lyons Justin Klug</p> <p><b><u>Montessori Assistants</u></b></p> <p>Donna Cave Kimberly Richardson Justine Royster Rajshree Ghaywat Clarissa Skaletski Grace Broadnax James Mills Rachel Lapow</p>	<p><b><u>Student Support Services</u></b></p> <p>Selena Cotto School Psychologist</p> <p>Colleen Marchant Williams, M.A.: Student Support Specialist</p> <p>Tricia Jacobs Reading &amp; Math Interventionist</p> <p>Emily Siegrist Nurse</p> <p><b><u>Special Education Services</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Learning Strategists</u></b></p> <p>Bethany Kumbalek Carrie Lawler Alyssa Peterson</p> <p><b><u>Therapists</u></b></p> <p>Claire Buchholz Speech and Language Susan Ward Speech and Language (PT) Julie Wellenstein Physical Therapy Casandra Wipperman Occupational Therapy</p>
<p><b><u>Paraprofessionals</u></b></p> <p>Emily Behrendt Christine Franklin Lilli Gonzalez Lamont Bush II Briana Cross Zhana Reed Somalia Warren</p>	<p><b><u>In-Building Substitute</u></b></p> <p>Carly Huibregtse (Art Teacher)</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**

	<p>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.</p>
	<p>We celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes. We believe there is always a better way of 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</p>
	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	



## 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 sixth 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. Applications are accepted for re-enrollment beginning on December 15th and ending January 31st.. Intent to Enroll forms will be made available on the school website at this time.
2. Open enrollment for new students will begin on February 1st and end on March 1st.
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 March 1st 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. The lottery will be held mid-March if needed. 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 30<sup>th</sup>. Applications will **not** be carried over to the following school year. **New applications must be submitted each year according to the above listed dates.**

## About the Montessori Approach

Montessori is both a philosophy of child development and a method of education used to 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. 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, organizing 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 provide care, 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 are designed so that the child receives instant feedback about their progress as they work, allowing them to recognize, correct and learn from an error without adult assistance. This 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.**

## **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.

### **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.

### **Upper Elementary (9-12-Year-Old)**

Having completed the rapid changes of their first nine years, 9-12 year olds begin to look outside of themselves toward the elements of culture which surround them. Their knowledge in areas such as geography, history and science expand rapidly, as do their skills in math and language, through which they express their growing knowledge. At the upper elementary level, real independence has much to do with successful functioning in a community environment. As a group, our teachers and students emphasize the importance of communication in building and maintaining social cohesion. Guides help them to form important foundations of independence, allowing them to engage more fully in the communities in which they contribute. Our teachers strive to offer students knowledge about the world around them, encourage their own curiosity, and help them develop into lifelong learners.

### **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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 (P.E.P.)**

P.E.P. is a prepay childcare program for ages K4 - 12 years of age. This is a wrap around program located in Penfield Montessori Academy from 3pm-4pm or 3pm-5pm. Only pre-enrolled families may utilize this service. Families must prepay on a monthly or weekly basis. Program shares are also available of those who qualify. Please contact the PEP Director for more information. Due to staff shortages K3 programming is no longer available. Enrollment is limited.

<i>Ages K4- 12 Programming</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>
3pm-4pm	\$6	\$30
3pm-5pm	\$12	\$60

\*ONLY 7 free sick days will be allotted, after that payment is still required based on the students previously approved schedule. For more information please contact the PEP Director or refer to the [PEP Policies & Procedures](#).

### **Visitor's Policy**

While observing COVID-19 threat levels, individuals may gain access to PMA's facility on a case-by-case basis depending on our school community needs. Upon building entry, all visitors/volunteers must follow PMA's COVID-19 Plan including mask regulations that follow CDC/MHD guidelines (regardless of vaccination status); frequent hand washing and sanitation; physical distancing to the extent possible (3-6 feet). School Administration reserves the right to deny entrance to any visitor/volunteer displaying COVID-19 related illness and/or known contacts of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. For the safety of all, please follow this link for [Access to COVID-19 Vaccinations in the City of Milwaukee](#).

### **Hours of Operation**

The school building is open on student attendance days from 7:30 am. until 5:00 p.m.

### **Arrival 7:30am - 8am/Dismissal 2:55-3:10pm**

Arrival will take place from 7:30am - 8am. After 8am a student is considered unexcused, unless the office has been notified of an excused tardy. PMA Families will receive carpool numbers to help school staff identify family vehicles in the pick up lane. Last names beginning with A-L and transportation vehicles will utilize the main parking lot on 24th street, while last names beginning K-Z will utilize 24th Place. In the AM, all PMA students will be personally escorted into the school building. Dismissal will begin at 2:55pm, unless the office has been notified of an excused early release. Students will be picked up on the same side they were dropped off on according to their last name. Parents should remain in their vehicles and a staff member will escort their child to them. If a conversation lasting more than 2 minutes is needed the parking lot attendant will ask the vehicle to pull up closer to the building to keep the pick up line moving. If a student is dropped off before 7:30am, entry to the building will be given. If a student arrives after 8am the parent will need to park and walk their child into the building. To Parents that arrives after 3:10pm would need to enter the building via the main entrance to receive their child (ren). A late fee of \$10 will be given to all late pickups.

### **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 participate in arrival and dismissal procedures. Please drive slowly and be very careful when entering and exiting the parking lot.

### **Late Drop-Off**

School starts promptly at 8:00 am. If you arrive after 8:00 am, your child(ren) will be marked tardy unless the office has received a phone call or email that can be used as an excused tardy. Parents must walk their child into the building and sign them in at the front office. Breakfast may be available for children arriving late to school.

### **Dismissal**

Children in the K3 program will end their school day at 11:00am. K3 students must be picked up in the main parking lot. A staff member from the child's classroom will bring the student to their family in the pick up line. The school day for children in K4, K5, and elementary programs ends at 3:00 pm. Students are required to say goodbye to a classroom staff member through a handshake, wave, hug or a verbal message. A staff member will escort them to their vehicle. Limited space will be available for pre-approved families in our after school programming, PEP.

### **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.

### **Food Program and Nutrition**

#### **Breakfast - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) - All students eat free**

##### **Breakfast**

Our school participates in the Universal Free Breakfast program. Breakfast from this program will be served free of charge to all children from 7:30am – 7:50am. If your child arrives after 7:50, breakfast will no longer be available. At that time, Guides will begin transitioning students to their daily work period lessons. We ask that parents say goodbye in the car line and let their children get escorted into the building by school staff.

A healthy morning snack is served to students daily. This provides children with an opportunity to practice food preparation and Grace and Courtesy skills. PMA will provide students snacks until a time when we may once again ask parents 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 cafeteria 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. When allowed, 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".

##### **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 snacks for their class. please refrain from sending your child with candy, fast food, and high sugar items. Your child's Montessori Guide can provide you with more ideas in which you can model health and wellness for your family. 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

### **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**

PMA staff are excited 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. School administration will identify on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to enter the building for classroom observations based on weekly tracking of COVID-19 statistics in the city of Milwaukee.

#### **Behavior Expectations**

Parents will be provided a copy of the PMA Discipline Policy and must sign and turn in the signature page. That document provides parents with the details of our school's behavior code. 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 Social Emotional Learning Competencies(SEL)

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.

### **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. 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.

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.

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.

### **Clothing policy**

Dressing or grooming in a manner that disrupts the teaching and learning of others. Shorts, skirts, jumpers, dresses and skirts must come to the knee. No offensive drawings, logos or sayings will be allowed on any piece of clothing. Clothing must be modest in nature and cover the body appropriately, including the chest and midriff areas.

### **Toilet Learning**

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 (K4-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 awakened, 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, processed foods and 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 three 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 Transparent Classroom school software 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 school 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.

## **Home Visit Policy**

Penfield Montessori Academy staff are expected to make a home visit to their students' homes by October Parent/Teacher Conferences. This is crucial for relationship building and transition purposes. There is research that proves students who receive a home visit from their teacher: Do better in school ; are less likely to be chronically absent; are more likely to do well on standardized tests. Research also shows the effects of home visiting on educators: Teachers change their thinking about students; experience mindshifts and rethink assumptions; get better at engaging students and show more empathy. Parents who meet with the teacher often times: Change their thinking about school; become less intimidated feel like partners with teachers are more likely to communicate with teachers and school.

## **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 everyday in order to maximize individual learning potential and 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 or email [daleyahwilliams@penfieldmontessori.org](mailto:daleyahwilliams@penfieldmontessori.org) 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 trancies.

- 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 Principal.
- 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 Family Liaison 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 Family and Community Engagement Specialist 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, refer to the Head of School, and the school counselor will have a conference with the parents and teacher to discuss the problem.

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 fail to cause the student to attend school regularly, as detailed in state statutes and municipal codes.

### **Truancy Intervention/Prevention Strategies**

1. Parent notification
2. Family Liaison 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 may be required to wear a mask or stay at home when signs of illness occurs:

General Illness	<a href="#">COVID-19 Symptoms in Children</a>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher</li> <li>● Vomiting on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours</li> <li>● Illness related diarrhea – within the previous 24-hour period</li> <li>● Draining rash</li> <li>● Fatigue or irritability that prevents participation in regular activities</li> <li>● Communicable diseases, which require treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever or chills</li> <li>● Cough</li> <li>● Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>● Fatigue</li> <li>● Muscle or body aches</li> <li>● Headache</li> <li>● New loss of taste or smell</li> <li>● Sore throat</li> <li>● Congestion or runny nose</li> <li>● Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>● Diarrhea</li> </ul> <p><u>Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trouble breathing</li> <li>● Persistent pain or pressure in the chest</li> <li>● New confusion</li> <li>● Inability to wake or stay awake</li> <li>● Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone</li> </ul> <p><u>Call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.</u></p>
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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 transportation 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 trained and designated by PMA’s school nurse. 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 the 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.

### **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**

Crisis responsive 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 inclement weather impedes safe travel to and from school. Usually, PMA's School Closings align with Milwaukee Public Schools' Closings. Watch or listen to Fox 6news or any local news channels for information, check Penfield Montessori's Facebook page, website, or visit the MPS website for immediate updates.

The Assistant to PMA's Administrative Coordinator 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 PEP (when in operation). Each parent will receive access to a School a Parent Handbook that contains the school's policies. A duplicate copy is always available in the office. Families who have enrolled their children in PEP will also have access to the PEP handbook, which follows WI child care regulations.

### **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 2021, 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. A copy of the schools Asbestos Management Plan is available in the main office during regular school hours. Any inquiries regarding the

management of asbestos containing materials in our school should be directed to Karie Anderson, Director of Facilities at karieanderson@penfieldchildren.org or at 414.345.6320.

## **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

This information is updated annually in our school website.

### **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. If you are sending your child to school with a cell phone, it must be kept in their backpack at all times. If a child is unable to keep their cell phone in their backpack, the Guide will hold onto it until the end of the day. Cell phone use by PMA students is not allowed in classrooms, restrooms, or hallways under any circumstances during the school day.

### **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 its 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 Family and Family and Family and Community Engagement

Specialist. 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 Family and Community Engagement Specialist within five school days of the informal discussion. The Family and Community Engagement Specialist 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 Family and Community Engagement Specialist 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 Family and Family and Family and Community Engagement Specialist. 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 Family and Community Engagement Specialist, and any staff member involved.

For complaints please contact:

Mr. Henry Berry

Family Liasion 414-999-2337

henryberry@penfieldmontessori.or

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### **Homelessness Annual Notice**

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C., ss. 11431-11436, sec. 25), Penfield Montessori Academy is committed to providing an educational environment that treats homeless students with dignity and respect.

Homeless students are provided with equal access to educational programs provided to other students, have an opportunity to meet state and district academic achievement standards to which all students are held, and are not segregated or discriminated against on the basis of their homeless status.

This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children and youth applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

### **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 Family and Family and Family and Community Engagement Specialist, who serves as the TITLE IX / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COORDINATOR for the school.

