



JOSEPH PENNELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Vision

Pennell is a place where all students feel safe, respected, and loved. Students experience the joy of learning through self-awareness, exploration, and the power of voice.

Joseph Pennell Elementary School

Student & Family Handbook


2023 - 2024

Mrs. Susan Lofton, *Principal*
sheyward@philasd.org

Mr. Louis Depa, *Assistant Principal*
ldepa@philasd.org

Office: 215-400-3680 Fax: 215-400-3681

Visit our Website! www.philasd.org/pennell

Follow us on Instagram! Pennell_Panthers 

Pennell Scholars and Families,

Welcome back to Pennell for the exciting school year 2023-2024! I am delighted to return as the principal and continue working with you, our amazing scholars and dedicated staff.

I am proud to share that we saw growth in all areas, including reading, math, science, and student attendance. This indicates the positive impact of our collective efforts towards academic excellence. It is through the collaborative work of our teachers, staff, and supportive parents that we have been able to foster an environment of growth and achievement.

As we continue into this new school year, our focus remains on the holistic development of our scholars. We firmly believe that regular attendance plays a vital role in academic success. I encourage you, as parents and guardians, to partner with us in reinforcing the importance of regular attendance. By maintaining open communication with us and emphasizing the value of attending school consistently, we can work together to create a positive and supportive environment for our students.

I am genuinely excited for the year ahead and the opportunities it holds for our students. With your continued support and dedication, we can build upon the achievements of the past and make even greater strides towards the development of our scholars.

Please stay tuned to our school website, Dojo and Instagram for updates on upcoming events, workshops, and other valuable resources. We invite you to join us in creating a vibrant and supportive school community.

Once again, welcome back! Let's embark on this journey of growth, learning, and success together!

Best regards,

Susan Lofton, Principal
Louis Depa, Assistant Principal

STAFF DIRECTORY 2023-2024

	NAME	ROOM	EMAIL
Principal	Susan Lofton	Office	sheyward@philasd.org
Assistant Principal	Louis Depa	305A	ldepa@philasd.org
Secretary	Maria Negron	Office	mmnegron@philasd.org
Classroom Teachers			
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PK	Stefanie Hersh	107	shersh@philasd.org
K	Carmen Perez (ELA)	102	carbrowne@philasd.org
K	Lori James (Math)	103	ljames@philasd.org
1	Kimberly Dunphy (ELA)	201	kdunphy@philasd.org
1	Kelly Lovett (Math)	202	klovet@philasd.org
2	Peter Taylor (ELA)	207	ptaylor2@philasd.org
2	Cara Tune (Math)	208	ctunemcintyre@philasd.org
3	Samantha Foreman (Math)	306	sforeman2@philasd.org
3	Randi Simon (ELA)	307	rsimon2@philasd.org
4	Tracy Gaal (ELA)	301	tduttongaal@philasd.org
	Dorothea Saadeldin (Sci/SS)	302	
4	Karl Budkevics (Math)	303	kbudkevics@philasd.org
5	Danette Sisco-Randolph(Math)	304	dsiscorandolph@philasd.org
5	Jennifer Overbeck(ELA)	311	joverbeckgiordano@philasd.org
Special Education			
SPECM	Melissa Maleno	309	mmaleno@philasd.org
Learning Support K-2	Hannah Orban	308	horban@philasd.org
Learning Support 3-5	Chrisnetta Warah	203	cwarah@philasd.org
Life Skills Support 3-5	Francesca Mazzeo	206	fmazzeo@philasd.org
Life Skills Support K-2	Vivian Still Brown	209	vstillbrown@philasd.org
Psychologist	Dr. Maria Ganci	205A	mganci@philasd.org
Speech Therapist	VACANCY	210	
Specialist Teachers			
ELA Teacher Leader	Trina Pemberton	205	tlpemberton@philasd.org
Physical Ed/Health	Megan Gerber	Gym	mgerber@philasd.org
Art	Deva Leveillee	308	dleveillee@philasd.org
Digital Literacy	Gina Calhoun	305	gcalhoun@philasd.org
Instrumental Music	Shami Beni	Auditorium	sbeni@philasd.org
Reading Specialist	Melissa Humm	211	mfuhrmeister@philasd.org
Student Support			
Counselor	Latasha Clark-Joseph	101	lmclark@philasd.org
Nurse	Kashawn Deshields	101A	kdeshields@philasd.org
SISL	Jennifer Jones	105	jemjones@philasd.org
Climate Dean	Megan Gerber	105	mgerber@philasd.org
Behavioral Program	Elwyn	310	

PENNELL P.R.I.D.E.
INTEGRITY

PURPOSE

RESPONSIBILITY

DETERMINATION

EXCELLENCE

BREAKFAST

Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade will eat breakfast in the cafeteria at 8:15. Students in 2nd-5th grade will have the opportunity to eat breakfast from 7:50 until 8:10 in the cafeteria before school begins.

ARRIVAL

Arrival: Arrival is **8:15 a.m.** Students are expected to line up with their classes in the back schoolyard at 8:15 a.m. Kindergarten and first grade students will report to the cafeteria for breakfast.

Tardiness: Students that do not arrive by 8:15 will be marked tardy and should enter the building through the front doors to receive a late slip.

Inclement Weather: In the event of inclement weather, students will be admitted in the back schoolyard at 8:15. Students will get seated with their classes in the auditorium and picked up by their teachers.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal: Dismissal is at **2:54 p.m.** First - fifth grade students will be dismissed from the back schoolyard.

Kindergarten students will be signed out in their classrooms at 2:50 p.m. Parents/guardians should enter through the front doors with a photo ID to pick up their kindergarteners.

PICKING UP STUDENTS, PHOTO IDENTIFICATION, AND EARLY DISMISSALS

Student Pick Up: Students may only be picked up by parents or family members listed on file at the school. *Please make sure anyone picking up your child is listed as an emergency contact with the office.*

Photo Identification: A new system requires a photo id or passport to pick students up. *Please have your identification prepared for the camera outside the building and when you enter the main office.*

Early Dismissals: If you need to pick up your child early, please do so before 2:30 pm. Early dismissals after 2:30 pm will not be allowed to ensure the safe transition of students at the end of the school day.

LATE PICK-UPS

Student dismissal is at 2:54 P.M. daily. Please plan ahead to make sure your child is picked up on time. We do not have the staff available to supervise students after dismissal, so we need your support in ensuring the safety of your child in being picked up promptly.

Excessive late pick ups (3) will result in a meeting with the administration to create a support plan to ensure students are picked up on time. Students who remain at school after 3:54 will be reported to the Philadelphia Police Department and the Department of Human Services.

AFTER-CARE AND VAN SERVICE PICK-UP:

Students will not be dismissed to be picked up for any type of van service or after-care prior to 2:54 P.M. Please make sure that you inform your service providers.

UNIFORM POLICY

All students in the School District of Philadelphia are required to wear uniforms. Uniforms are expected during classroom trips. The Pennell School official uniform consists of the following:

- Solid navy or white collared shirts
- Tan pants or skirts

Shoes: Close-toed shoes must be worn to ensure the safety of students.

Shorts: During hot weather days, knee-length tan shorts with a finished hem may be worn.

ATTENDANCE

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law and Board of Education policy require that all children of “compulsory school age” who reside in Philadelphia County attend school regularly. In addition to regular attendance, it is expected that students are on time for school. Attendance is an extremely important factor in ensuring continuity of learning and overall academic success.

When it is necessary for a student to be absent, please send in a signed and dated [Absence Excuse Note](#) upon the child’s return to school. If a note is not presented to the school within 24 hours, the absence will be coded as “unexcused” and the School District of Philadelphia’s truancy process will be followed.

Please also note the following as it relates to District policy regarding absence notes:

- *Absences totaling three (3) or more consecutive days require a doctor’s note; and,*
- *Those absences excused with a parent note, totaling eight (8) days (cumulatively in one academic year), all subsequent absences require a doctor’s note.*

BEHAVIOR

To ensure a safe, educational, and social learning environment, the Pennell Elementary Faculty and staff follow the School District of Philadelphia [Code of Conduct](#) and the School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for disciplinary procedures.

The school will work closely with families in order to provide additional support and/or resources for scholars with repeated Code of Conduct violations. However, scholars with several violations will be prohibited from participating in school events and/or trips. Parents will be notified in advance.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 249 AND HARASSMENT POLICY 248

Please review the School District’s [Anti-Bullying Policy 249](#) and [Harassment Policy 248](#).

CELL PHONE PROCEDURE

Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours. While in school, cell phones must be completely turned off. Students who violate this procedure will have their cell phones confiscated and returned at the end of the day. If a student violates this procedure a second time, the cell phone will be confiscated by the dean and returned following a conference with a parent or guardian.

MEDIA RELEASE FORMS

[Media release forms](#) will be distributed the first week of school. Please sign and return.

SCHOOL VISITOR, VOLUNTEER, AND CHAPERONE PROCEDURES

School volunteers and field trip chaperones are always needed and greatly appreciated! To assist in providing a safe and optimum learning environment, these guidelines are established for school visits.

All **visitors** must sign in at the main office and get a visitor's pass. A photo ID or passport is required to enter the building.

All **volunteers** and **chaperones** are mandated by the state of Pennsylvania to provide the following clearances:

- o [Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance](#)
- o [Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check](#)
- o [FBI Criminal History Report](#)

Please note that you will not be able to volunteer without having these clearances. **If you have clearances that are older than 60 months, you must renew your clearances.** Additionally, all volunteers will be required to attend a [volunteer training/orientation](#) before volunteering in the school.

Visitors that would like to meet with a teacher must schedule meetings ahead of time during the teacher's lunch or prep to not interfere with instruction.

HOMEWORK

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade to reinforce classroom learning. Please support your child's homework and study practices, and ask your child what he/she is learning in school. Students should engage in reading either independently or with someone at home for 15 minutes each night.

PARTIES/TREATS

Snacks and treats for class parties are at the discretion of the classroom teacher and will be limited to lessen the impact on instructional time. Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to send in treats. No nut products are permitted in the school due to food allergies.

PROPERTY

Please clearly label your child's clothing and personal materials (books, bags, etc.) with their name and room number. Children are not permitted to carry large sums of money, toys, electronic games, or expensive jewelry. The school will not be responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or traded.

School textbooks and technology are the responsibility of students. Families are subject to replacement costs of lost or damaged school property.

DISPENSING MEDICATION

Parents should confer with the child's physician to arrange medication time intervals to avoid school hours whenever possible. When medication absolutely must be given during school hours, certain procedures must be followed.

1. No medications (prescription or non-prescription) will be administered in school except by direct order from a family physician.
2. Medications will be administered in the schools only when the following provisions are met:
 - a. The family physician must complete the district's prescription medication form or submit a note listing particulars of the medication (name of medication, dosage, time, schedule for administration, duration of administration, curtailment of any specific school activities).
 - b. The parent or legal guardian must sign the district's consent form for prescription medication.
3. Any medication to be given during school hours must be delivered directly to the school nurse, the school principal, or his/her designee by the parent or a responsible adult. The medication must be brought to school in the original pharmaceutical dispensed and properly labeled container.

ILLNESS IN SCHOOL

If your child becomes very ill at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick him/her up from school. Emergency contacts must be filled out accurately with a current telephone number and emergency contact, preferably a neighbor or close relative.

Please do not send your child to school with any visible signs of illness in the morning, including vomiting, sore throat, fever, sweating, etc.

Pennell School-Wide Expectations

<i>Setting</i>	Cafeteria	Hallways	Classrooms	Bathrooms	Schoolyard & Recess	Auditorium
Responsible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep feet under the table 2. Get everything you need for lunch the first time 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry your hall pass 2. Walk directly to your destination 3. Stay in your line 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Come with all supplies 2. Complete all assignments 3. Come in uniform 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flush the toilet 2. Wash your hands with soap 3. Use the time you need and return to class 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Line up by your class in the morning 2. Make sure you have all of your belongings 3. Stay in the schoolyard 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sit with your back against the chair and your feet on the floor 2. Make sure you have all of your belongings before exiting
Respectful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep feet and hands to yourself 2. Follow instructions the first time 3. Stand in line 4. Wait for your table to be called to begin eating 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep feet and hands to yourself 2. Follow instructions the first time 3. Use your hallway “quiet” signal 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use appropriate language 2. Keep your hands and feet to yourself 3. Follow instructions the first time 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knock on stall before entering 2. One person in the stall at a time 3. Keep feet and hands to yourself 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep your hands and feet to yourself 2. Follow instructions the first time 3. Use equipment appropriately 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep your hands and feet to yourself 2. Follow instructions the first time 3. Wait for your class to be called before lining up
Safe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use inside voice 2. Place trash in the trashcan when it comes to you 3. When exiting and entering, line up with your teacher 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand on your designated spot 2. Walk on the right side of the hallway 3. Stay with your teacher/buddy at all times 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use inside voice 2. Throw away all trash in the trash can 3. Keep classroom clean from outside food 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the amount of toilet paper you need and dispose of it properly 2. Use inside voice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand at your designated spot 2. Stay on your side of the recess yard 3. Listen for instruction the first time from staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throw away trash in the trash can 2. Push the seat up before exiting the row 3. Use inside voice

PENNELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We also believe that our families and school community are vital to our school and its mission to encourage student success. Below are some programs, assemblies, and enrichment opportunities that we offer at Pennell:

- **Quarterly** School Advisory Council (SAC) Meetings for Parents/Guardians
- Student Assemblies/PBIS Programs
- Student Government Association
- Parent/Guardian Workshops
- Find Your Instrument (F.Y.I.)
- After School ALL-STARS
- Legacy

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

We encourage every family to become an active member of the School Advisory Council. We believe that “Schools and families bring out the best in children.” SAC team meetings will be held quarterly. Please contact the school if you are interested in joining the SAC team.

IMPORTANT DATES

Back to School Night is scheduled **in person** for Thursday, September 14th, 2023 from 4:00-6:00 pm.

Below are the report card dates for the 2023-2024 School Year:

- November 27, 2023 Full day. ***School closed to students.***
- February 1-2nd, 2024, ***Report card conferences are ½ days for students***
- April 3rd-4th, 2024, ***Report card conferences are ½ days for students***

Please check other important dates on the [School District Calendar](#).